

MERRY ENGLAND

CONTENTS

ONE SHILLING]

[MONTHLY.

JUNE, 1884.

PAGE

A GOTHIC ARCHITECT. By GEORGE AITCHISON, A.R.A. With an Illustration of the Tower at Cardiff Castle	73
IN THE WILDERNESS. By W. H. HUDSON.	85
A HEROINE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.	
By Mrs. VERNON BLACKBURN	88
THE INTERVIEW. By IVAN TOURGUENIEF .	108
SONNET. By WILFRID MEYNELL	119
AN ENGLISH PRINCESS. By JOHN OLDCASTLE	120
REVIEWS AND VIEWS	135

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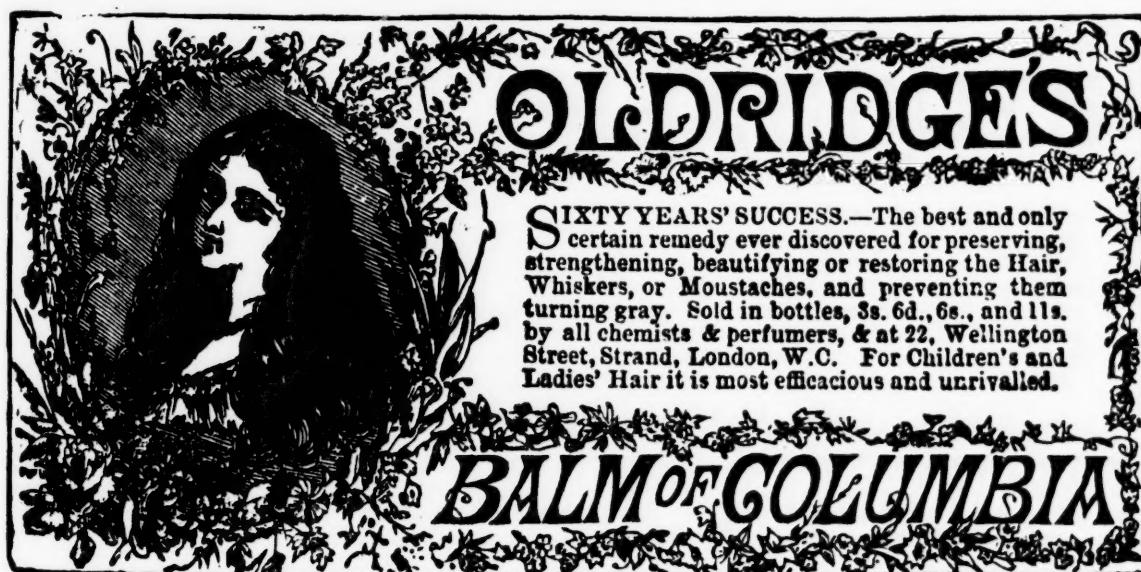
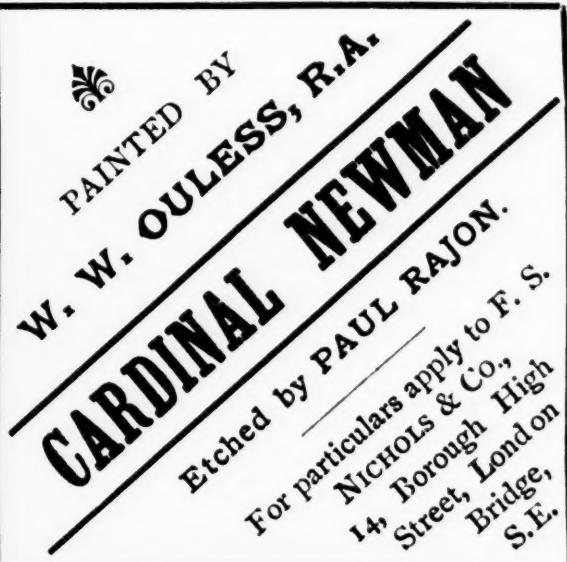
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Merry England.—Contents for June.

	PAGE
A GOTHIC ARCHITECT. By GEORGE AITCHISON, A.R.A. With an Illustration of the Tower at Cardiff Castle	73
IN THE WILDERNESS. By W. H. HUDSON	85
A HEROINE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By Mrs. VERNON BLACKBURN	88
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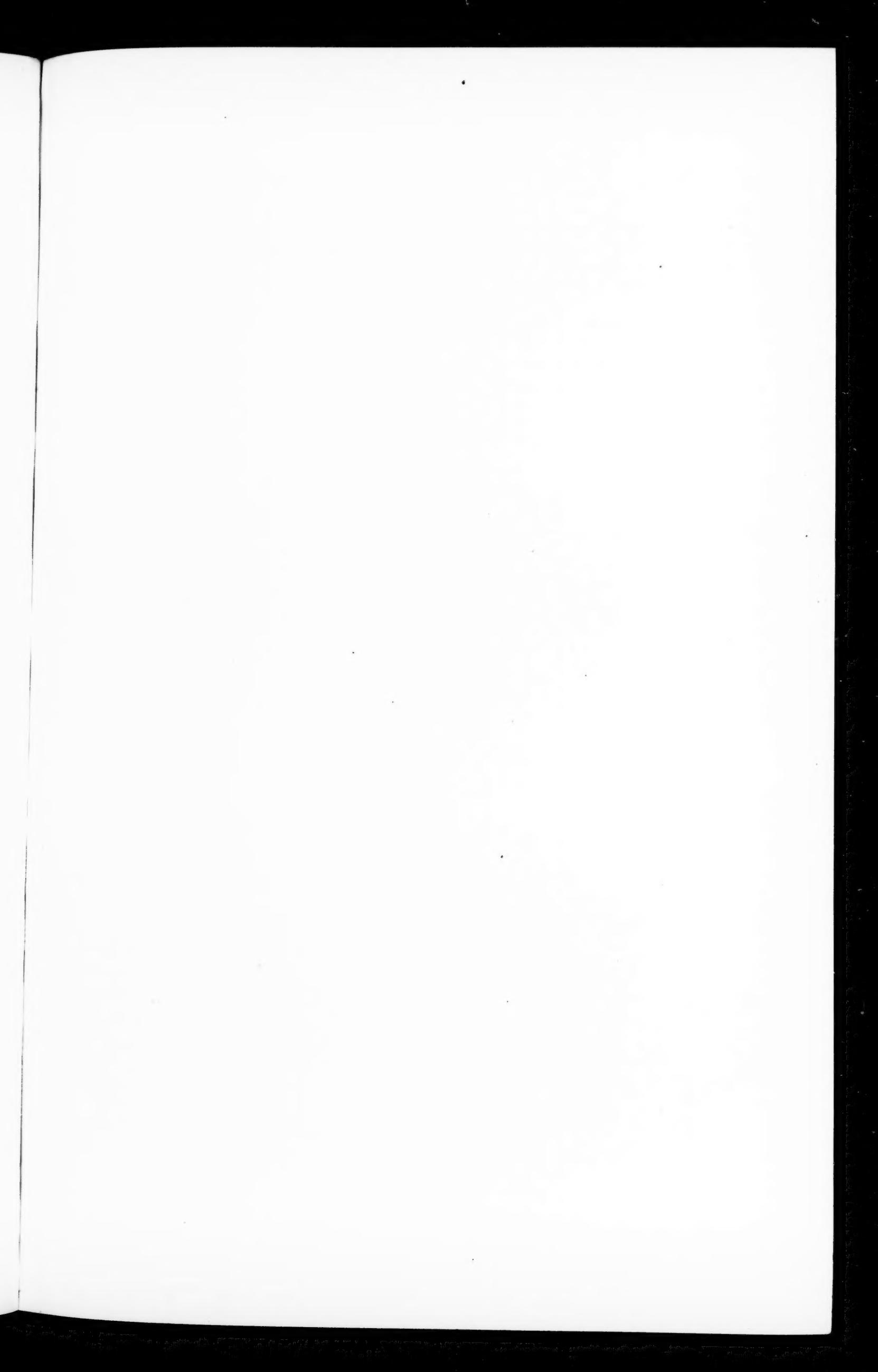
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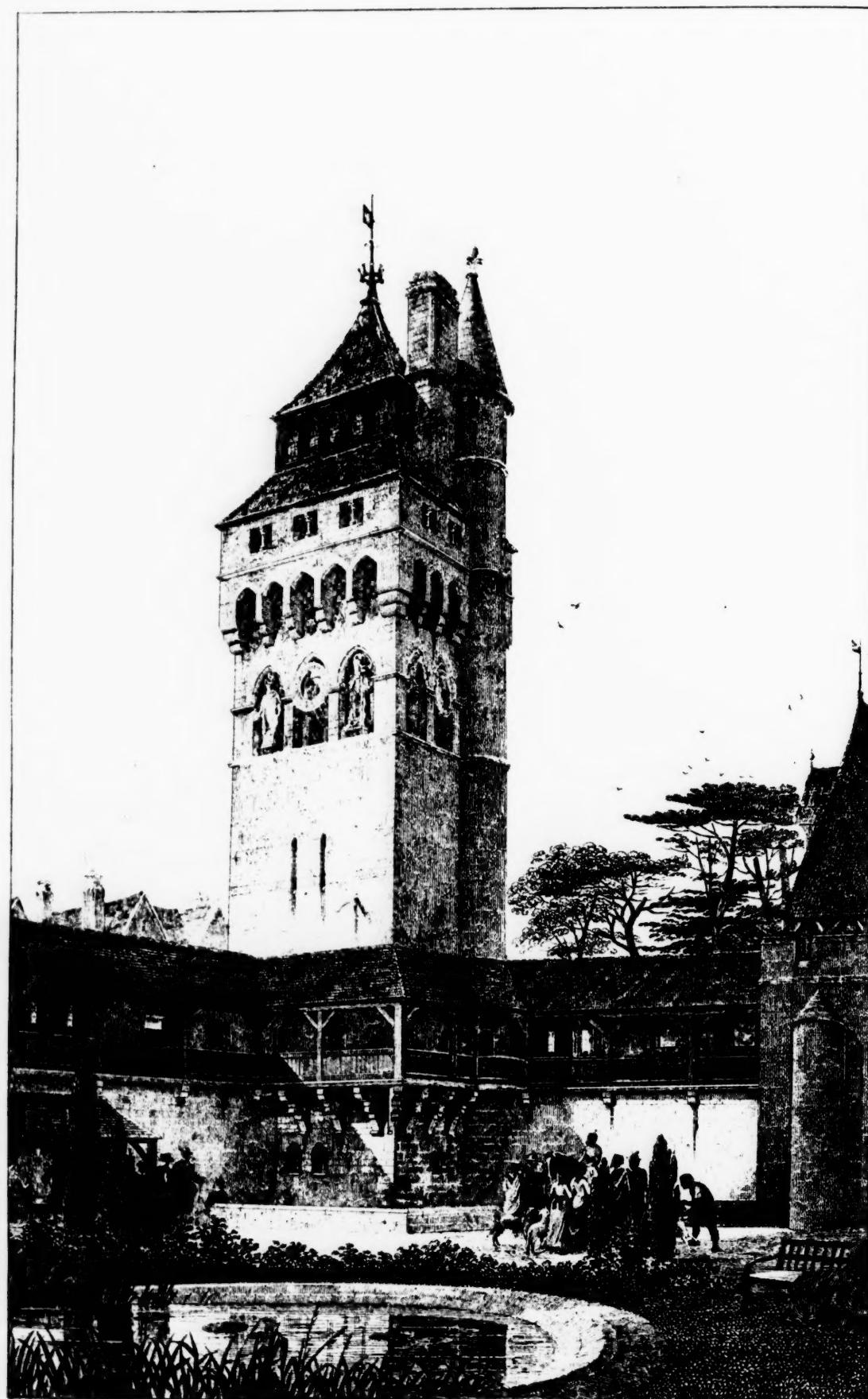
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MERRY ENGLAND

JUNE, 1884.

A Gothic Architect.*

IN 1853, when I was a student in Rome, I made the acquaintance of Captain Drummond at the English Academy. As soon as the season was over he used to give picnics to the English artists and residents who still remained in town. Some place of antiquarian interest was picked out at a riding distance from Rome, and most of the company went on horseback, but there were carriages for those who preferred driving to riding. On one eventful summer morning it was agreed that I should go to Gamgee's stables, with a friend who kept his horse there, and get a mount, but being rather late I found every horse but one gone; this horse had been ordered by a gentleman of unknown name for an hour before, but as he had not come for it, we persuaded Gamgee to let me have it. We joined the cavalcade at the Porta del Popolo, and a few hours' canter brought us to La Storta; while we were waiting for the guide the carriages arrived. A short man, with

* A paper, read by Mr. George Aitchison, A.R.A., before the Royal Institute of British Architects, May, 1884. Surely Mr. Aitchison should be persuaded to gather together in a volume the addresses he has given from time to time, not forgetting those very interesting reminiscences of his friend, the late George Mason, A.R.A., delivered before a Staffordshire audience some years ago.

light, curly hair and spectacles, was objurgating the man who took his horse. I was the culprit, and the objurgator was Burges. However, we settled the matter amicably, and as he preferred going back in a carriage, I had the painful pleasure of returning on the beast that brought me. We examined some of the ruined walls of ancient Veii, and entered the tomb of the Lucumo, whose skull and bronze helmet, pierced through and through with the bronze javelin head, still reposed upon a central slab ; the tomb was cut in the rock, the central chamber being domed and adorned with rude wall-paintings, on which Burges descanted. We then discussed our luncheon, and rode home in the cool of the evening. Of that merry company, amongst whom were G. Mason, Poingdestre, Whitburn, Eagles, and others, how few remain !

I saw but little of Burges in Rome, but I saw and admired his designs for the church ornaments to be used in Sir Frederick Leighton's " Procession of Cimabue's picture." At Sir Frederick's suggestion, Burges and I travelled together when we left Rome after the Holy-week in 1854, and took our farewell of Mount Soracte. We travelled in *vettura*, the lumbering hackney-coach drawn by two wretched hacks that with difficulty drag you twenty miles a day ; but this mode of travelling gives you an ample opportunity of seeing the country you pass through, and the towns you stop at. We passed through Sta. Maria degli Angeli, and saw the church rent by an earthquake, and the miserable inhabitants camped in temporary wooden barracks. At Assisi we made our first long stay ; the hotel being full, we stayed at a private house, at the modest cost of 1*s.* 7*d.* per day,—our landlady explaining that as we were English gentlemen accustomed to luxury, she could not charge less. Poor Burges suffered there from a continued diet of pigeons stuffed with rosemary. After exploring the town, and getting a pair of five-foot rods made by the carpenter, we made studies of the painted decorations of the

Churches of St. Francis. In our spare time we strolled the town, read Dante and Sacchetti, discussed art, and had our first experience of a slight earthquake. We then went to Perugia, and saw the Sala del Cambio and other buildings of importance ; and then took the *diligence* to Florence, discussing the Roman defeat as we passed Lake Thrasymene.

Our plan was to read Murray on the way, mark the objects of interest, on our arrival to go up the highest tower and see the town and its surroundings, and then to explore the town, visit the places we had marked, take notes, and measure such things as we thought would be useful.

Burges was then thoroughly versed in the Gothic architecture of England and France, and had come to Italy mainly to study architectural painting and mosaic, goldsmith's work and secular buildings, as he despised the Gothic architecture of the Italian churches. After seeing Florence we went to Siena, measured the Palazzo Tolomei and other palaces, went to San Gimignano de delle belle Torre, visited Boccaccio's house at Certaldo, went to Pisa, and, while Burges sketched in the Campo Santo, I measured an old brick palace in the town, the Café del Ussero. We then went to Pistoja, measured the Palazzo della Communità and the Paliótto, that splendid altar-front of gilt silver and enamel, made to replace the one stolen by Vanni Fucci and his friends. We then went back to Florence, measured the battlements of the Palazzo Vecchio, the staircase of the Bargello, and other parts of interest, and here Burges was laid up, and I measured the Palazzo Salviati, went to Prato, and to see some friends in the country, while he designed and executed a book-cover for Tennyson's poems. As soon as he was well we went back to Pisa, and saw the magnificent festival of St. Ranieri, which only takes place once in seven years, to commemorate his return from the Holy Land. The crossings of the streets through which the procession passed were carpeted with flowers in patterns, and at night the

whole town was splendidly illuminated, so that when we left after midnight for Lucca, Pisa looked like a town of fire. We went from Lucca towards Modena, but where the countries join on the mountains we were stopped, and found that we must either go back or hire a military escort, on account of the cholera in Tuscany ; and though we thought this a curious sanitary precaution, we were half inclined to incur the cost, as we thought our parents would be flattered by our making a sort of royal entry into Modena guarded by a troop of horse soldiers ; but economy prevailed over vanity, and we went to Leghorn and took ship for Marseilles, stayed at Lyons, thence to Beaune, where we measured the roof of the hospital. I let down the keys of this loft, tied on to a tape, through a hole in the floor, to see how high the roof was above the stone pavement ; their jingling on the stones, and then ascending, was taken by one of the patients for a sign, and we had much bother to persuade the abbess to let us continue our measurements. As we were both in blouses, and black as sweeps, our appearance was not in our favour.

Thence we went to Dijon, where we measured the porch of Notre Dame, and the front of the Hôtel Chambellan. It was arranged between us that we should do no work on fête days, but always take a stroll in the country ; but, in point of fact, I do not think we ever did ; for, before we even reached the suburbs, Burges always espied a by-street that promised to contain some archæological treasure. He had long been anxious to find an example of the red cloth put under pierced iron-work, and in one of the French towns we found a pierced knocker-plate in a back street. He explained the case to the occupier, a smith was found at a neighbouring wine-shop, and the knocker and its plate were taken off, and sure enough under the plate was found a piece of cloth, blackened for the most part, but with a bit of scarlet here and there, where wet and dust could not penetrate.

From Dijon we went to Troyes, and measured part of the cathedral, which was under repair. We then went to Ville Neuve l'Archevêque, and thence to Sens, where we saw the "Anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders" sculptured on the porch of the cathedral, and here we parted—I to go to Paris, and afterwards back to Italy, and Burges to Chalons-sur-Marne and elsewhere.

During our travels I learned he was born on December 2, 1827, that his father was the well-known engineer of the firm of Walker & Burges, that he had matriculated at the University of London, had attended some lectures on engineering at King's College, that in spite of his father's desires and the splendid prospect open to him if he became an engineer, he was so full of love for antiquarianism and Gothic architecture that he would be nothing but an architect; that he had been articled to Blore, had afterwards been with Sir Digby Wyatt, had sketched in England and elsewhere with Mr. Salter, measured Amiens spire with Mr. Warren, had travelled in France with Mr. H. Clutton, and helped him with the illustrations of his "Domestic Architecture of France," and that through the advice of Mr. Bruce Allen he had determined to measure everything important, and find out its whole method of construction. When I met him he was a rabid Mediævalist, and believed there was no salvation out of the thirteenth century. Sir Digby Wyatt had nicknamed him "Troy," because when it was suggested to Burges that he should make a view of Troy, he said that, in accordance with the custom of the Middle Ages, he should make all the architecture of the thirteenth century.

He was so profound an archæologist that he used to jeer at Blore for declining to give his opinion on the age of a wall because there were no mouldings on it, saying he should have known by the size, working, and bonding of the stones, and by the mortar joints, to what age it belonged.

You may easily imagine his scoffs at the Pagan architects of the Renaissance, and his hope that some day "he might make that old wretch, Sir Christopher Wren, turn in his grave." He did, however, allow there was one Pagan architect living that he respected—Professor Cockerell—though he added there is so little to learn in the style that the merit is small as compared with learning the Mediæval style.

I have always looked upon it as one of the privileges of my life to have had the chance of being constantly with this genius for so long a period. Unfortunately, biographical sketches of men of thought are necessarily dull; the flame of genius can only be seen in their works, and those workings in the alembic of the mind by which new products are distilled from the materials provided, are necessarily hidden from mortal eyes; the exact portraiture of the man cannot be given without offence during the lifetime of the persons to whom he was dear.

The minute, exact, and profound knowledge of Mediæval architecture, decoration, furniture, and letters that Burges had acquired was tempting him to produce a treatise on them for the use of students, when the publication of Viollet-le-Duc's "Dictionary" took the wind out of his sails—perhaps fortunately,—for the publishing architect was turned into the practising one. But we are now speaking of him in the embryo state. He was then one of the most rapid and brilliant draughtsmen I ever met with, and had the most inexhaustible fund of invention: illustrations of literary incidents, designs for chalices, crosiers, knives, scent-bottles, comic alphabets, caricatures, Mediæval towns or buildings, came forth from his pen, pencil, or brush without a moment's reflection; and although his humour was shown rather by his drawings than by his words, he would on occasion give vent to epigrammatic sentences. "Academies are the death of art" may be instanced as one of them.

At this time his one besetting fear was lest he should be carried off by accident before he could show the world his genius and his knowledge ; his one great hope that he might hereafter partly realize in a house of his own his views of artistic completeness, and no Arab ever had more gorgeous visions than Burges. This visionary house was to be of perfect Mediæval pattern, full of quaint carvings, and blazing with colour, hung with costly stuffs embroidered in gold, and lighted by silver lattices whose storied panes were of cut gems. He was to have jewelled chalices to drink from, and aloë and sandal-wood to burn.

Even the castle-building of so eccentric a man of genius seems to me to have its value as giving us some insight into those powers he felt himself possessed of and that he most wished to exercise. Well, it was this : he would be first an architect and build a specimen of every ordinary human construction except a cathedral ; he would amass enormous wealth, and spend some of it in realizing his views in his own house ; he would marry ; he would, as soon as these varied works were done, become a Member of Parliament, and correct some of the abuses of society ; he would then go into the church, become a bishop, and, with his wealth, build a perfect cathedral of the most costly materials, adorned with the most perfect specimens of all the subsidiary arts ; and when this was done, he would end his days as a monk or a hermit.

He returned to England, I believe, at the end of 1854, and I in the spring of 1855 ; he had then designed a claret-jug and a jewel-coffer for a client, and in the same year he entered into competition with Mr. H. Clutton for Lille Cathedral. In March, 1856, I went with him to Lille, and saw the competition drawings, and we afterwards went to Tournay. It is said Viollet-de-Duc at first believed that Clutton and Burges's set were some old drawings of the thirteenth century, until he saw "Whatman" on the paper. For once, Burges

met his match at repartee, which was no small thing, for, when angered he was like the bee, *ponit animam in punctu*. He was fond of talking to workmen, and was always anxious to know of them how long they thought it would take him, the accomplished architect, to learn their trade. On this occasion we went into the kitchen of our hotel at Lille, and saw the cook, a little hunchback. And after Burges had explained who he was, and that he expected to have the Cathedral to build, he asked how long the cook thought it would take to learn cooking thoroughly. "Ah, sir, in a fine art like mine one is never master of it ; one is always learning."

In 1857 he restored some of the images and designed others for Salisbury Chapter-house, and restored the building, in conjunction with Mr. H. Clutton. He gained the first prize for the Memorial Church at Constantinople in 1859 ; he designed the Cathedral for Brisbane, restored Waltham Abbey, and in 1862 gained Cork Cathedral, in competition, altered Gayhurst House for Lord Carington, and delivered the Cantor lectures at the Society of Arts ; in 1864 he decorated Worcester College Chapel, Oxford ; in 1865 he began the restoration of Cardiff Castle for Lord Bute, and built a house for Mr. McConnochie at Cardiff ; in 1866 he designed the School of Art at Bombay ; in 1867 competed for the Law Courts, and published a book of his designs for them. In 1869 he built Knightshayes for Sir J. H. Amory, Bart. ; and in 1870 he built the church at Studley for Lord Ripon, and that at Skelton for Lady Mary Vyner, and published his book of architectural drawings, containing many of the examples we measured together. In 1872 he began his series of drawings and models for the decoration of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. In 1873 he competed for the Cathedral at Edinburgh, and made the drawings for Hartford College, U.S. ; built Templebrady Church, Ireland, and the Speech Room at Harrow. In 1876 he began to build his house in Melbury Road, the internal

decorations of which were not completed at his death. His last work was the additions to the Maison Dieu at Dover, to convert it into a Town Hall, since completed by Mr. Pullan.

On January 28, 1881, he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and he died on April 20 of the same year. Rarely has any architect been followed to his grave by so many mourning friends, mainly architects from all parts of the country.

A book of his designs was published last year by Mr. Pullan, his brother-in-law.

It seems to me that there are now only three points for our consideration—the effect of his works and teaching on public opinion, on the younger men of the profession, and the merits and peculiarities of his works. Horace Walpole, in the middle of the last century, advocated the return to Gothic architecture as a patriotic and antiquarian revival, and made rude attempts to apply Gothic ornament and surface decoration to buildings. His notion spread, but it was not till nearly the second quarter of the present century that this antiquarian revival was passionately advocated ; and this outcome of late Roman Catholicism was called Christian, while its supporters poured out floods of obloquy on those who admired or practised any other style.

Augustus Welby Pugin began the onslaught with his "Apology for Christian Architecture," and the public, who are always interested in a literary conflict, especially if the *odium theologicum* can be imported into it, were easily converted to Gothic, as all forms of beauty were equally indifferent to them, and the advocacy of Gothic supplied them with staple for discussion and abuse. The battle was kept alive by such generals as Sir Gilbert Scott, Street, and Burges, and such was the enthusiasm of the first and last for Gothic that nothing but great temptation would make them abandon it. Burges, who was the youngest, ablest, and most learned of the three, naturally

produced a powerful effect on the public, though by some ill-luck he never got his fair share of the large works carried on. The effect he produced was not a little assisted by his quaintness and pungency of expression ; yet in spite of all this passionate advocacy, other influences were at work which silently but surely sapped the foundations of this new Jericho, whose walls at last fell without even the sound of a trumpet. It was generally felt that dignity and simplicity were more allied to our present civilization and turn of thought than Gothic perplexity. For constructive purposes the introduction of iron had superseded the methods used in the Middle Ages, and the advancing arts of painting and sculpture found themselves too incongruously surrounded in Gothic buildings to be used with effect, even when their highest forms were not resolutely excluded by the architects themselves. The simplicity and matured elegance of form in the higher works of painting and sculpture supplied an inconvenient standard of judgment in Gothic buildings. These considerations had, however, but little effect on the young and ardent enthusiasts of Gothic, steeped to the lips in the diatribes of Pugin and Ruskin ; Burges's pupils and young admirers drank in with undoubting faith the precepts of one who was so enthusiastic, so certain, so skilful, and so learned, and they were quite prepared to accept the architecture of the thirteenth century as the ultimate standard of perfection, for were they not always hearing the master say, in criticizing any new work, "I ask myself what a thirteenth-century architect would have done in this case ?"

I never saw any of Burges's designs for buildings that were made before he went to Italy, and while he was there he did not fail to appreciate the grandeur and massiveness of its palaces, and as he absorbed the good from all the Gothic examples he saw, his work for ever after bore traces of that influence. In the same way he was impressed with some

Arab forms which he afterwards rarely relinquished. Another marked peculiarity was his fondness for circular forms, and it was rare indeed to find any considerable building in which this fondness was not shown. Nearly all his designs for cathedrals show his preference for the circular end over the square. The Law Courts and his own house show in a marked way this tendency.

His works, or at least those in which his judgment was unfettered, exhibit his predilection for vigorous simplicity ; better examples cannot be given than Mr. McConnochie's House at Cardiff, and the Harrow Speech-room. If the Law Courts were to be Gothic we must all regret that he was not entrusted with them, as in his design, the Strand front was a grand composition, and the proportion of the parts noble. Even Sir G. Scott, a rival competitor, speaks of it thus : "While Mr. Burges, though his architecture exceeded in merit that of any other competitor, was, nevertheless, eccentric and wild in his treatment of it." How the Government could have passed him over when they had such a genius to their hand, is difficult to understand, and the plea that his plan was bad is well disposed of by Sir Gilbert :—"An able and artistic architect can surely make a good plan, while no amount of skill in mere planning can by itself enable a man to produce a noble building"—a truth that those who have the disposal of our new public buildings should take to heart.

Burges's skill, however, was by no means confined to pure architecture ; his inexhaustible invention was shown in his church ornaments, in the accessories to houses, and in the quaint designs for figures and figure-subjects with which all his works were overspread. Perhaps the stained-glass windows of his own hall afford one of the best illustrations of his skill and inventiveness in this direction. The subjects are the spirits of Sound floating out of the ringing bells. His devotion to one phase of art may be well recommended to the student ; his

desire to master all the cognate arts may be pressed on the attention of those whose genius will enable them to imitate him, and we have but two regrets to add—one, that a man possessed of so strong a personality did not leave an autobiography ; and the other, that we have not more of his executed works.

GEORGE AITCHISON.

In the Wilderness.

THOU white-winged gull that far I see
 So buoyant in blue heaven soar,
 Ah, would thy wings were mine !
 How swiftly would I fly this shore
 To scenes for which I pine ;
 Where dwells unsullied loveliness,
 With calm and peace divine,
 Far in the untrodden wilderness.

My soul is sickened with the stress
 Of life, nor more responds to cries
 Of those who lose or win
 The things they struggle for. The prize,
 The battle's dust and din,
 Alike I loathe and seek the rest
 That dwells the desert in,
 Aloof from man on Nature's breast.

There earth with brighter sun is blest—
 In purer dew-drops burns its beam,
 Than gather here, alas !
 There many a heron-haunted stream
 And many a plain I'd pass,
 A thousand, thousand flowers behold
 Strew all the wayside grass
 With crimson, white, and blue and gold.

There winds would sing to me, the old
Old sea give forth a solemn sound,
The wild birds warble mirth ;
There would I stop to kiss the ground
For very love of earth ;
And swift away the years would glide,
Like rills that have their birth
High on the soaring mountain side.

To gaze upon the prospect wide,
Oft on some jutting crag I'd lie
When blooms its summer crown—
Pale heath and pansey's purple eye,
The wind-flower, and the brown
And green blades of the bearded grass,
Whose spears wave up and down,
White sparkling when the wind doth pass.

And there I'd muse and sigh, alas,
This transitory state of ours—
Whose destiny is the tomb—
To liken to such things as flowers,
A little while that bloom
And sweets of paradise exhale
From aisles of stony gloom,
From wood and wold and winding vale.

For everywhere the blossoms frail
I love—to me do preachers seem,
And have for me a speech
With many a mystic mournful theme ;
And subtle things they teach—
(Not like harsh lessons writ with pen)—
And inner sense oft reach,
That wakes not in the haunts of men.

The hoary hills I'd liken, when
The flowers in all their fissures blow—
 The rocks so seamed and grey
With all the length of years they know,
 And yet to pass away,
Not doomed like things that draw the breath
 Of life and of decay—
Unto a monument of death.

Memorial there the sleeper hath,
Whose dust before the wind like chaff
 Has long been scattered wide ;
There blooms his living epitaph ;
 And still while time shall glide,
Those letters, blooming, fading, speak,
 Thus flourished he, thus died ;
Thus bloomed, thus paled in death his cheek.

Sad are such thoughts, yet who would seek
To blot them from his spirit's page ?

 Who on his nothingness
Thinks not—how brief his pilgrimage ?
 Oh, rather let him bless
The thoughts that teach the unwilling sight
 To look with less and less
Of terror on the coming night.

W. H. HUDSON.

A Heroine of the Seventeenth Century.

WHEN the seventeenth century dawned upon France, it found that country in a state of transition. There, as in all the rest of Europe, the religious dissensions of the sixteenth century had left their marks upon society. By the accession of Henry IV. to the throne in 1589 the troubles of the League came to an end ; but the effects were seen on every hand. The kingdom had been desolated by civil war and by religious differences. Indeed, civil war was ever on the point of breaking out, and ultimately to the wars of the League succeeded the disturbances of the Fronde. In spite of this, the Court and the upper classes were steeped in dissipation and luxury, while art and literature reached a culminating point of glory. The numerous memoirs and letters of the time, such as those of St. Simon, Mdlle. de Montpensier, and de Grammont gives us detailed accounts of saints and sinners, of noble wives and royal mistresses, of brave soldiers and obsequious courtiers. Here are depicted a Bossuet and a Fénelon, as well as a Richelieu and a Mazarin ; and saints like Francis of Sales and Vincent of Paul are succeeded by Voltaire and the Encyclopædists. Good and evil, vice and virtue, here jostle and elbow each other.

Women of necessity play a prominent part in this scene ; their influence upon this brilliant throng of courtiers meets us on every page. But by the side of beautiful and witty sinners are other women, perhaps less known because less spoken of in the "Chroniques Scandaleuses," who nevertheless influenced not only their era but our own day. They, too, were the coadjutors of men, but of men of a different type from that of the frequenters of Court and camp ; men upon

whom the miseries of society had made a deeper impression than its glittering joys. Amongst these men one figure stands forth prominently, whose name has become a synonym for charity—St. Vincent of Paul.

Born in 1576 at Pouy, a village at the foot of the Pyrenees, and belonging to humble peasant folk, he early left his flocks to enter the ecclesiastical state. Living at a time when religion in France was at a low ebb, and when the spirit of the world had invaded the sanctuary itself, Vincent, nevertheless, led the life of a holy and devout priest. Himself a son of the people, he knew and understood all the poverty and misery to which war and wicked rulers had reduced them, and his long life was devoted to two objects—the regeneration of the clergy, and the amelioration, both spiritual and temporal, of the lot of the poor. Although called in the course of time to the Council of the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, and standing high in favour with the magnates of the realm, this holy priest never for a moment let these objects of his life out of sight; but he carried on his work with persevering ardour tempered only by prudence, and distinguished by that rare quality in that or any other age—a holy simplicity and single-mindedness. In due course Vincent became the founder of a religious community consisting of priests, called the Congregation of the Mission, and of the Daughters of Charity, perhaps better known as the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent of Paul. In this latter work he was aided by a woman whose name will be ever associated with his, as that of Madame de Chantal with that of St. Francis of Sales—I mean Louise de Marillac, Mademoiselle Le Gras.

The family of de Marillac was one of consideration in Auvergne. The grandfather of Louise had eight children, of whom two attained to great eminence in the State—Michel, known as the Chancellor de Marillac, and Louis, who became a marshal of France. Another son, Louis, Seigneur de

Ferrières, married Marguerite de Camus, and became the father of the subject of this sketch. Louise was born in Paris on August 12, 1591, and lost her mother in her early infancy. Her father devoted himself to his little daughter with a care which hardly allowed her to feel the want of a mother's love. The child was very delicate, and when she became old enough to leave home, M. de Marillac confided her to the care of one of her aunts, who was a nun in the royal monastery of St. Louis at Poissy.

In this splendid abbey, founded by Philip le Bel, and favoured and enriched by all his successors, the childhood of Louise passed peacefully away. Ancient and modern literature was cultivated with care and success at Poissy. From her teacher, Sister Odeau, the translator of St. Bernard's sermons, Louise learnt that Latin which, we find from an expression in one of St. Vincent's letters, "she understood so well." Here, too, she was also in constant intercourse with another learned nun, Anne de Marquest, considered to be one of the first Greek scholars of the day. When, after a time, M. de Marillac recalled his daughter to Paris, he himself undertook the completion of her education. Her talent for painting, which was then cultivated, remained to the end of her life one of her favourite amusements. Nor was the solid learning of the time, and especially philosophy, for which she showed great aptitude, neglected. And so it came to pass that at an early age Louise was well fitted to take up the position in the "great world" to which she was by birth entitled.

But the solid and pious education she had received drew her mind away from the butterfly existence of fashionable women to more serious thoughts. Her uncle, the Chancellor, had assisted to introduce the order of Carmelites from Spain, and their strict rule seems to have had a wonderful attraction for the delicate ladies of France. Later on, that gentle penitent, Louise de la Vallière, left her royal lover and the

Court for its strict enclosure, and she was but one of many who made a similar flight from the fastidious softnesses of the Court to the rigours of Carmel. And Louise de Marillac herself desired to enter either this Order or that of the Daughters of the Cross, for whom the Duchesse de Mercœur had built a convent in the Rue St. Honoré. To this end she consulted the Provincial of the Capuchins, the Père de Champigny, who dissuaded her from her project, saying that "the Lord had other designs for her."

During this time of doubt, Louise lost her father, and, her relations pressing her to come to some decision as to her choice of a state of life, she accepted the hand of a young secretary of the Queen, Antoine Le Gras, a member, like herself, of an Auvergnat family. Her marriage took place on February 5, 1613, the bride being then twenty-one years of age. The family into which Louise had now entered did not, like her own, belong to the "noblesse;" therefore, according to the custom of her time, she was not entitled to be called Madame, but only Mademoiselle Le Gras, and by this name she has been honoured and revered by her spiritual daughters for two hundred years.

Louise and her husband loved each other tenderly, and their happiness was completed by the birth of a son, who was baptized Michel Antoine, and who became his mother's life-long joy and care. "Detached from the maxims of the world," says her biographer, "the young mother kept more than ever aloof from the Court, leading an existence consecrated to duty." The education of her son, together with the care of the five orphan children of her aunt, Madame d'Attichy, who were the wards of her husband (of whom one is known as the beautiful Comtesse de Maure, and another as the Duchesse d'Atri), and the supervision of her household affairs, and acts of charity and piety—these occupied all her time. Her husband's constant companion, except when she was called

away to console some unfortunate, or to carry to a sick person food and succour, she passed her days in the conscientious exercise of the duties of her state. We must not, however, imagine that she shunned society. On the contrary, she "received" at her house in the Rue Cours au Villain, after the manner of her contemporaries. In 1619 she was visited by St. Francis of Sales, when the holy Bishop of Geneva accompanied the Cardinal of Savoy to Paris to negotiate the marriage of Prince Victor Amadeus of Piedmont with Madame Christine, the sister of Louis XIII. She was also the great favourite of all her relations, and especially of her uncle Michel, the Chancellor. He never ceased to take an affectionate interest in his niece, and in his letters to her we find him warning her against giving way to the scruples which a too sensitive conscience often caused her. Some of these mental annoyances arose from an idea that she might have been faithless to the inspirations of grace by entering the married instead of the religious state; and the very fact of her tender love for her husband and son appears to have increased her inquietude.

Naturally, her spiritual director, Monseigneur Camus, Bishop of Belley, no less than her uncle, enjoined her to fight against such scruples as these—the tricks of a too sensitive organization or of defective health. For some time their efforts were in vain. To her—generally so clear-headed and strong—everything seemed dark and obscure, and nothing seemed left to her but to abandon her husband and child, even at the cost of breaking her heart. "During ten days," she writes in one of her letters, "this uncertainty filled my soul with an agony which seemed unbearable." She knew not where to turn. If the Bishop of Geneva had been alive!—but he was dead. Monseigneur de Belley treated her scruples as they deserved to be treated; but this only suggested to her that she ought perhaps to seek some less lenient director. "At last," to use her own words, "during holy Mass, on the day of Pentecost, in an

instant my spirit was cleared of all its doubts. It seemed to be made plain to me that I was to remain with my husband ; but that a time would come when I should be in a condition to make the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in union with other persons who would do the same. This would be in a place where I should succour my fellow-creatures, and the work would be new." Then she adds, "I could not comprehend how this could be ; as I was to be able to come and go"—that is to say, there was to be no enclosure as was then the universal custom in religious houses. Louise emerged from this trial stronger, and entirely consoled. Nor was it without a good effect upon her after-life. Called upon, as she was in the future, to assist the souls of others, she was able by her own experience to compassionate their tribulations.

Monseigneur de Belley, being obliged to be often absent from Paris for a long time together, recommended Louise to commit herself to the guidance of the Venerable Vincent of Paul ; and thus began that intercourse which was to have such signal results. Monsieur Vincent, as he loved best to be called, was, with his good sense and prudence, exactly the adviser of whom Mademoiselle Le Gras was in need. His two favourite maxims were that we should love God "with the work of our hands and the sweat of our brow ;" and that "in our neighbour we should see the image of Jesus Christ, serving and loving each other in Our Lord, and Our Lord in one another."

Meanwhile, after nearly twelve years of a happy married life with a husband who entirely sympathized with her aspirations, a great trial came upon Louise. Antoine Le Gras was threatened with softening of the brain, and that danger being averted, he fell into a state of confirmed ill-health. Here at the bedside of him she loved, the faithful wife served her first apprenticeship to that vocation in which she was to excel—the relief of the sick and dying. His sufferings were great, but

his patience was admirable. After many weeks of suffering, the breaking of a blood-vessel hastened the end ; and, in December, 1625, he died. Louise herself writes : " It was night, and I was alone with him at this solemn hour. He said nothing but ' Pray to God for me, I can do no more '—words which will remain ever engraven on my heart." And so it was. Never were either those last words, or he who uttered them forgotten. The anniversaries of her marriage and of his death were sacred days with her all her life, to be consecrated to his memory, and to be devoted to special piety and prayer.

A new life now began for Louise. Her son, who was her foremost thought, was of an age to be sent to college. She left her house in the fashionable quarter of Paris for one in a humbler neighbourhood, the Rue St. Victoire, which commended itself to her for several reasons, the principal being that it was close to the Seminary of St. Nicholas, where she had placed her son, and that here, retired from the world, she could devote herself to the solace of the poor and afflicted, which was henceforth to be her vocation.

Poverty appears to be an inseparable adjunct to large cities; but the poverty of Paris in the seventeenth century exceeded that of other places and times. The charitable institutions founded in the Middle Ages, and under entirely different conditions of life, seemed powerless to make any headway against it. The desolated Provinces poured their destitute population into the capital. Mendicants, thieves, and honest paupers became inextricably mixed together till they formed a real danger to the city. The David who was to slay this giant of misery was an humble and obscure priest.

Some eleven years before this time, Vincent of Paul had set his hand to the work by a seeming accident. Preaching at Chatillon, near Bresse, he was asked by a lady to appeal to the charity of the congregation on behalf of a poor family in the

neighbourhood. This he did with such effect that the whole village turned out to its assistance, and even overwhelmed it with the needed things. The idea then suggested itself to Vincent that this spirit of charity might be regulated as well as roused ; for which purpose he formed the women of the village into a society, called the Confraternity of Charity. This Confraternity of Charity he erected in almost every town and village in which he gave missions. Its aim and rule were very simple, and consisted of ten articles, of which I give the following :—“The end for which this Confraternity is instituted is for the assistance of the sick poor ; spiritually, that those who die may be prepared to quit this world, and that those who recover may be induced to resolve never again to offend God ; corporally, that nourishment and medicine may be administered to them ; and, finally, to accomplish the command of Our Saviour that we should love one another. The patron of the charity is Jesus Christ, Who is charity itself. The Confraternity is to be composed of a certain number of honest women and girls, admitted with the consent of their husbands or parents, and called the Servants of the Poor. By these the sick and poor are to be regarded as children of whom God has made them the mothers, to serve them by turns each day, obtaining the meat from the butcher, the bread from the baker, and the wine from the inn, preparing the dinners and suppers and carrying them to their charges. Added to this, they are to love each other like sisters, to pray for each other, and to honour Our Lord by the virtue of Charity.”

These Confraternities soon took root in different parts of the country, and were approved of by the Archbishop of Lyons in 1617, and by the Archbishop of Paris in 1620. We, who are in the habit of having our charitable meetings and Dorcas Societies, can scarcely form an idea of the magnitude of the revolution which was caused by these humble associations. It is within the mark to say that they were the foundation of all

such charitable societies in all countries in modern times. Paris itself did not long lag behind in the good work. St. Vincent first established a Confraternity in the parish of St. Sauveur, and this was followed by another organized by Mdlle. Le Gras and six other ladies in the quarter which she now inhabited as a widow.

But useful as the Confraternities were, they did not fulfil all the requirements of the founder and his now zealous assistant, Louise Le Gras. To the first associates, who were taken from amongst country women, accustomed from childhood to hard and rough work, the nursing of the sick, the cleansing of poor huts and the preparation of food, were neither repugnant nor difficult ; but when, as in Paris and other large towns, ladies of the highest rank joined the "charities," the task became more complicated. These delicate and high-bred seventeenth century dames, with all imaginable good will, could do but little for the poor, for they had never learned to do anything for themselves. Besides, there was the danger of their catching infectious complaints and taking them to their families. The delegation of dangerous and difficult work to others not being within the scope of the foundation, St. Vincent supplied this remedy. In his various missionary travels he had often met with good and pious girls, who, though they had no intention to marry, had no vocation for cloister life, and yet were anxious to devote themselves to good works. It was therefore agreed that when St. Vincent found a subject suitable for the work, he was to send her to Louise, who engaged to prepare her for the labours she was ready to undertake—that is to say, the Ladies of Charity, as they began to be called, were to find the necessaries for these young women to arrange and apply.

A young girl of Suresne, called Marguerite Naseau, was the first to present herself for this work, and is worthy of a short notice. Marguerite was a poor shepherdess, who, having taught herself to read and write, conceived the idea of commu-

nicipating these advantages to others of her own station. Going from village to village, she gathered the children round her, teaching them their letters, and such simple prayers and pious practices as she knew herself. While engaged in this work she was discovered by St. Vincent, and she joyfully offered her services to Mdlle. Le Gras. After a while a few young work-women joined themselves to her; and Louise devoted herself to their training, and divided them amongst the different parishes in Paris. Such was the humble beginning of the community of the Daughters of Charity, which now counts between thirty and forty thousand sisters of all nationalities and all ranks of life, from royal princesses and daughters of noble houses down to the simple village-girls, of whom it was first composed, and which possesses nearly two thousand institutions, as various as the afflictions of men, in all parts of the world. And thus did Louise de Marillac become the assistant of St. Vincent in all his great works, and gain for herself the well-earned title of "Mother of the Poor."

She was now sent into the Provinces to visit the various Confraternities of Charity, and to set them in good order. She was accompanied by three other ladies, Mdlle. du Fay, Mdlle. de Villesein and Mdlle. Dufresne, and these were joined by Mdlle. Pollalion. This lady was left a widow at the age of twenty-six, and leaving the Court, where her great beauty and intelligence had made her a favourite, henceforth devoted her life to God and to her neighbour. Ultimately she became the foundress of the Sisters of Providence, an educational Order. Her biographer says: "With Mdlle. Le Gras and some other ladies, she visited the Confraternities of Charity established in the provinces. These two souls, Louise Le Gras and Marie Pollalion, were made to comprehend and complete each other. Mdlle. Pollalion—ardent, energetic, and repulsed by no obstacle, capable of publicly striking a woman who was seeking to corrupt a young girl, of dressing herself as a servant in

order to gain over others to good, or as a peasant in order to instruct the shy and ignorant villagers—could only gain by contact with Mdlle. Le Gras, so wise, so prudent and equal minded ; and the latter was sustained by the energy and decision, so foreign to her own character, of her friend." Travelling from village to village, putting the Confraternities in good order, and providing school-mistresses for the children, Louise never flagged ; but the unusual exertion and fatigue, acting upon a naturally delicate constitution, brought on an illness which, although it did not last long, necessitated her return to Paris.

But the times were such as to allow little rest to "the Mother of the Poor." The dirty and undrained condition of the towns, and the want of proper nourishment for the poor, caused an outbreak of the plague. M. Feillet, in his "*La Misère au temps de la Fronde*" says : "In the presence of a malady which a touch or the breath of the infected could communicate, the most sacred relations ceased. The towns were abandoned and were like desert places for months together. The grass grew in the streets, and these were traversed by hordes of wolves attracted by the unburied corpses. The peasants neither ploughed nor sowed, and a year of plague was succeeded by a year of famine, and this again by the plague." Consequently, in 1631, the Hospital of the Hôtel Dieu at Paris had four times as many sick as could be decently accommodated. The "Charities" of the parishes multiplied their efforts, and Louise exposed her life with such courage and generosity in nursing the plague-stricken as to call forth a cry of admiration and astonishment even from St. Vincent. What a contrast did she present to the fine Court ladies, amongst whom were her own cousin, the Comtesse de Maure, and her friend, Madame de Sablé. These ladies secluded themselves in their luxurious chambers, thinking only of preserving their own health and complexions, without a

care for the poor and the stranger. Mdlle. de Montpensier draws a ridiculous but true picture of these cowardly women in her "Princesse de Paphlagonie" where she represents them as afraid to breathe any air but the perfumed air of their bed-rooms, and refusing to admit their nearest relations for fear of infection. Voiture, writing to Madame de Sablé, says, "that for fear of infecting her, he has sent his letter twenty leagues off to be copied by a man whom he has never seen."

Delicate as Louise was, she escaped all danger ; but her first spiritual daughter, Marguerite Naseau, fell a victim to her charitable exertions. Having nursed a woman to convalescence whom she had found plague-stricken in the street, she in her turn was attacked. Taking leave of her companion, she presented herself for admittance to the Hospital St. Louis, and, asking for a bed, died amidst those to whom she had devoted her life. Noble ending for the first Daughter of Charity ! Her death was so great a blow to Louise that it was judged advisable that she should leave Paris for a time, and she was, therefore, again sent by St. Vincent to visit the different "Charities" in the provinces. In the prosecution of her task she encountered some opposition from the diocesan authorities at Chalons, but the humility with which she relinquished her most cherished plans in a spirit of obedience disarmed all opposition.

But all Louise's courage and submission to the will of God could not keep her from troubling herself about her son. She was ever imagining that some evil was happening to him when he was out of her reach, and it was only on this point M. Vincent says of her that she "showed any womanish weakness." In spite of his saying this, however, he himself sympathized with this excessive mother-love, and no father could have watched more tenderly over a son than the aged saint over young Michel Le Gras. In all his letters he tells the mother the minutest circumstances about him : "M. votre fils" he reports,

"is well. I often see him. Our Lord and his Mother will specially protect him for your sake. He is cheerful and wise beyond his age," and so on. Louise's favourite uncle, the Chancellor, and his brother, the Marshal, were adherents of the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, and having incurred the displeasure of the great Minister, Richelieu, they were thrown into prison after the celebrated "day of dupes," where Michel died and Louis expiated his opposition to his powerful enemy upon the scaffold. His wife, a relation of the Queen Mother, died before his execution, broken-hearted at not being able to obtain a reprieve. Louise was away from Paris at the time, and St. Vincent writes to her: "Madame la Maréchale has gone to receive in Heaven the reward of her trials." Knowing Louise's love for her relations, he adds, "You do well to weep, for did not the Son of God Himself weep for His friend, Lazarus ?"

All these cruel sorrows served Louise only as a stimulant to fresh acts of charity ; and finally, in 1633, she chose out of a number of aspirants three or four with whom she began the regular foundation of the religious community of the Daughters of Charity. On March 25 in the following year, she and her daughters first bound themselves to their labours by vow ; adding to the usual ones of poverty, chastity and obedience, another "to devote ourselves to the service, corporeal and spiritual, of the Sick Poor, our true masters." Hitherto, the sisters had not led a community life, but each one had in the different parishes been at the service of the Ladies of Charity. Now, although they still did the same work, they lived together, according to certain as yet unwritten rules, laid down by St. Vincent and Louise Le Gras. Louise's house became the "Maison Mère" which was the *home* as well as the training place of the community. Nor was the undertaking an entirely pleasant one for her. The delicate and in some things fastidious noble lady now found herself called upon to associate daily and live in community with women of a different class and habits.

These good country girls, however well-intentioned, were mostly rough and unpolished. Many had even to be taught to read and write ; all had to be trained in ways of gentleness, of kindly consideration for others ; they had to learn to be soft-footed and low-voiced, and to acquire all the other qualities requisite in those who were constantly with the sick. They had also to be trained in piety, prudence, and all the other habits without which the life in community is impossible. Until this time a religious life meant a cloister life apart from the world. It is true that from the earliest ages monks and nuns had devoted themselves to teaching and to the care of the sick and poor. To every Benedictine house (and from the sixth century these were in the majority) was attached a guest house or hospital, and here the nuns nursed the sick, preparing medicines and often acting as surgeons ; in their schools they taught children of all ranks, and the abbey gates were daily thronged with the poor. The Reformation made a great change. In England the suppression of the convents and monasteries threw thousands helpless upon the world, and generations of statesmen have been puzzled what to do with the poor, "who are always with them." In France many of the Religious Houses were burnt and impoverished during the wars between the Huguenots and Catholics. The population in both countries was increasing, and with it pauperism. In England the outcome of this state of things was the workhouse ; in France the Sisters of Charity.

Louise's task was no easy one. Her community was to consist of girls and of widows "unencumbered with children," destined to seek out the poor in the alleys and streets of cities. To quote from their rules, they were "to have for monastery the houses of the sick, for cell a hired room, for their chapel the parish church, for cloister the streets of the town or the wards of the hospital, for enclosure obedience, for grating the fear of God, for veil holy modesty." Louise's courage, perseverance

and devotion overcame all difficulties, and she succeeded admirably in giving a solid foundation to a work which was to win the admiration of after-ages for “the humble women who, in the world yet not of it, dressed its wounds, soothed its sorrows, dried its tears, and becoming mothers without ceasing to be virgins, succoured and nourished its children.”

Space will not permit me to dwell upon the gradual growth of the Order of the Daughters of Charity, nor to tell of all the labours of those “Ladies of Charity” who, like Richelieu’s niece, the Duchess d’Aiguillon, Madame de Hersault and others, were ever ready to assist St. Vincent and Mdlle. Le Gras in all their undertakings. The administrators of the Hôtel Dieu, served by Augustinian nuns, gave permission to these ladies to visit the sick there, and these, with four Sisters of Charity, aided the nuns to introduce a more healthy and sensible way of supplying their wants. The same ladies also assisted St. Vincent and Louise in founding the General Hospital and that of the *Enfants trouvé*, or foundlings, besides sending large alms to Lorraine, Picardy and Champagne, the provinces most desolated by war, plague, and famine. But when the zeal of the great ladies cooled, and their time became more occupied with their duties in the world, these works of charity must have fallen to the ground, if Louise Le Gras and her daughters had not stepped in and filled all gaps. By the May of 1636, the community had so largely increased as to necessitate larger premises, and Louise removed to a house at La Chapelle, where she doubled her labours by adding to them the teaching of the children of the poor, and organizing Retreats for women of the world. These Retreats were religious exercises lasting about ten days, during which those who participated in them shared the life and humble fare of Louise and her daughters.

The year of this removal to La Chapelle began another series of disastrous wars. The Spanish army overran Picardy, pillaging and burning wherever they came. A general flight

of the inhabitants to Paris took place, and La Chapelle was on the direct route of both fugitives and invaders. Louise and the Sisters now worked harder than ever. Their house was transformed into a refuge where women and girls flying from the frontiers found amongst the Sisters of Charity an asylum. On all hands demands for the services of her daughters poured in upon her. They were wanted for the military hospital at St. Germain, for the prison infirmaries, and amongst the convicts in the galleys, for the poor schools at Liancourt, and many other places. The details of the founding of these different works are most interesting, but I will confine myself to two—those of the “*Enfants trouvés*” and the General Hospital.

A terrible evil had, amidst all this misery, sprung up in Paris. Three or four hundred infants had, during a single year, been left in the streets by their parents, who were probably themselves in want of food. The Lieutenant of Police had these little unfortunates taken to a house known as “La Couche,” and there placed in the care of a widow, whom the city paid for her work. This woman kept only two nurses ; and the poor babes rescued from death by exposure in the streets, too often died at La Couche from hunger or from the laudanum and other sedatives administered to them by their guardian ; or else they were sold by her to the professional beggars and thieves. St. Vincent had his attention called to this state of things by Mdlle. Le Gras, and soon after, passing along a deserted street at night, he saw a beggar attempting to cripple a little creature in order to excite the compassion of people by its miserable condition. The Saint, in horror, tore the child from the miscreant, and carried it in his cloak to Louise.

The next thing was to prevail on the Ladies of Charity to take up the work, and after many trials he obtained for it the patronage of the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria. One of the most touching episodes in the life of St. Vincent is that which

describes this venerable septuagenarian passing along the streets of Paris at night, rescuing the poor babies out of the gutters and carrying them to his Daughters of Charity. He did not live to see the ultimate success of his Foundling Hospital, but after his death it was established on a firm basis, and before the revolution in 1776, seven thousand children had been received. To it Jean Jaques Rousseau, the apostle of sentimentality, brought his offspring. Suppressed at the Revolution, it was afterwards restored, and it still flourishes in full vigour.

The General Hospital was a later foundation and began in this manner. Amongst its population of 700,000 souls, Paris counted no less than 40,000 paupers, vagabonds, and mendicants, infesting the streets, soliciting alms, often sword in hand, and stealing all they could lay hands on ; they also counterfeited all manner of infirmities. At nights they assembled in the so-called Cours des Miracles, and bold would have been the officer of justice who had ventured there. What the police had failed to compass, was undertaken by the President of the Paris Ladies of Charity, Madame D'Aiguillon, in conjunction with Mdlle. Le Gras and others. Louise consulted St. Vincent, and it was determined to erect a hospital where the poor and infirm of all ages and both sexes should find a refuge. The Queen Mother bestowed lands upon it, and Cardinal Mazarin headed the list, to which all Paris contributed, with 100,000 livres. In two years the buildings were finished ; M. Abelly (afterwards Bishop of Rhodez, and the biographer of St. Vincent) was appointed rector ; and the Sisters of Charity were installed as managers. An order of Parliament called upon all beggars and infirm to assemble at a stated time and place, so that relief might be afforded them according to their age, sex, and infirmities. But as the rules of the new establishment wisely demanded some kind of labour from those who were able, such a general exodus took place

from the *Cours des Miracles* that, according to a rhyme of the period,—

“On n'a jamais vue dans Paris
Tant de gens si soudain guéris.”

In spite of this, five thousand came and were taken into the new buildings. It disappeared at the Revolution and was never restored, but the Little Sisters of the Poor carry on in these days almost the same work in their asylums for the aged and infirm.

Louise, in the midst of all these numerous and important undertakings, never relaxed in her care for her son. It had been her hope that he would enter the priesthood, but as he came of age he confessed to his mother that he had no inclination for the ecclesiastical state, and that he wished to leave Paris. Louise was much troubled, especially by his desire to leave the capital. St. Vincent writes to her: “If all those who are not always with their parents are lost, where should I have been? Do you not know that each one must work out his own future?” With fear and trembling the mother let her beloved one go. Constantly in his correspondence with her, St. Vincent exhorts her to have more confidence that God will cause all to be for the best. In one of his letters he says: “I never saw a woman so strong in other matters, so weak as a mother. In God's name, leave your son to the care of his Heavenly Father, Who loves him even more than you do.” Naturally of a loving disposition, Louise clung to her spiritual children as well as to her blood relations with a strong affection. Tender to them, she was said to be severe only to herself. Her own spirit of sympathy she was constantly impressing upon the Sisters. She exhorts them to practise “our dear virtue, cordiality.” “Serenity of countenance, modest smiles and gracious words” are to be used by them in their intercourse with each other and with their

neighbours." At last her cares for her son were finally settled. In 1650 he married Gabrielle Le Clerc, daughter of Nicolas, Seigneur de Chevières, "jeune demoiselle, bien vertueuse," writes the now happy mother to one of her spiritual children. An only daughter was the fruit of this union; and her birth gave as much delight to her grandmother's community as to her parents themselves. In her will, Louise left to this child eighteen livres a year in order that with this sum she might give an annual dinner to the poor of her parish which she was to serve herself. Her son thus happily settled, and her community firmly established and approved, as it was in 1655, by the Holy See, Louise felt that her work was accomplished. The rest of her life was one of great bodily suffering, but in spite of weakness and pain she never ceased to guide her community.

But the end was at hand. Early in the February of 1660 she was attacked with violent fever, and Michel Le Gras, with his wife and daughter, were summoned to her side. She lingered, however, for some weeks till the 15th of March, when, surrounded by her spiritual daughters, she gave her last blessing: "My dear Sisters," she said, with a great effort, "I wish all our Sisters could have been here, but you will tell the others that I pray Our Lord to give you the grace to live as true Daughters of Charity in union and love one with another. That is all I beseech of God for you." These words were almost her last. At half-past eleven on Passion Sunday she went to her well-earned rest. She had not the consolation of bidding farewell to him who had so long been her spiritual Father; for Vincent of Paul, overcome by his great age and infirmities, could not do more than send her his blessing from his own sick bed. But he survived her only six months.

Thus lived and died Louise de Marillac, Mdlle. Le Gras. The lives of her contemporaries are preserved in the chronicles of their time. Her memory is embalmed in the hearts of her

spiritual descendants ; and in the wilds of Abyssinia, as well as in our crowded cities, wherever is seen the white cornette of the Daughter of Charity, bringing in her hands loving help and consolation, there is raised a monument monarchs might envy to the memory of "The Mother of the Poor."

E. VERNON BLACKBURN.

The Interview.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN, BY EDWARD FOORD.

I WAS sitting in a birch copse one autumn about the middle of September. The weather was unsettled ; a fine drizzle had been falling at intervals since the early morning, alternating at times with warm sunshine ; the sky now was overcast with white, fleecy cloudlets, now suddenly became clear in patches for a moment, and then through the rent clouds the azure peeped, bright and genial, like a beautiful eye. I sat and looked around and listened.

The leaves hardly rustled overhead ; one could tell the season of the year by their sound alone. It was not the joyous, laughing thrill of spring, nor the soft whispering and prolonged hum of summer, nor the shy, cold lisping of late autumn ; but a scarcely audible, drowsy babbling. A gentle breeze wafted faintly over the tree tops. The interior of the wood, moist from the rain, varied incessantly according as the sun shone, or was obscured by a cloud ; now it was all lighted up, and everything in it seemed to smile ; the slender trunks of the not too closely planted birch trees suddenly acquired the soft sheen of white silk, the little leaves lying on the ground became variegated and glowed like red gold, and the ruddy stalks of the tall tufted bracken, already coloured with its autumn tints, like the hue of the over-ripe grape, glided about, tangling and intersecting each other endlessly before one's eyes. The next moment everything around was again suffused with dark blue ; the glowing colours were instantly extinguished ; the beeches became white and lustreless—white as newly fallen snow yet untouched by the cold ray of the

wintry sun ; and slyly and stealthily the most delicate rain began to trickle and rustle through the wood. The birch foliage was still nearly all green, although visibly paling, only here and there stood a solitary young tree all red or golden, and it was a sight to see how brilliantly it glowed in the sun when his rays, with infinite play of light and shade, pierced and glided through the thick network of slender twigs just washed by the glistening rain. Not a single bird was to be heard—they were all silent and under shelter ; only at rare intervals the mocking note of the great titmouse resounded like a little steel bell.

Before stopping in this birch copse, I had passed with my dog through a tall aspen wood. I confess I am not over fond of that tree—the aspen—with its pale lilac trunk and ashy green metallic foliage, which it stretches up as high as possible and waves in the air like a shivering fan ; I do not like the eternal fluttering of its round, slovenly leaves, clumsily attached to their lanky stems. It is beautiful only on a summer evening when, rising solitary amid low brushwood, it meets face to face the ruddy rays of the setting sun, and glitters and trembles, bathed from root to summit in one yellowish purple glow ; or, when on a bright windy day, it loudly lisps and ripples against the blue sky, and every leaf, caught by the current, seems as though it would tear itself off, fly down and whirl away into the distance. But altogether the tree is no favourite of mine ; and so, without staying to rest in the aspen wood, I went on to the birch copse, nestled under a little tree whose branches, beginning close to the ground, afforded a shelter from the rain ; and after admiring the surrounding scene I fell into that short tranquil slumber known only to the sportsman.

I cannot say how long I slept ; but when I opened my eyes all the interior of the copse was full of sunshine, and in every direction the clear blue sky peeped and sparkled through the

merrily rustling foliage. Dispersed by a joyous breeze, the clouds were scudding away ; and one felt in the atmosphere that peculiar dry freshness which, filling the breast with a sort of bracing sensation, almost always presages a calm bright evening after a rainy day. I was preparing to get up and try my luck again, when suddenly my eyes rested on a motionless human form. I looked attentively. It was a young peasant girl. She was sitting twenty paces from me, hanging her head pensively ; and had let both hands fall on to her knees. In one hand, half open, lay a thick bunch of wild flowers, and at each breath she drew it slid gently on her checkered skirt.

A spotless white bodice, closely fastened at the neck and wrists, clung to her figure in graceful folds ; and two rows of large yellow beads hung from her neck and rested on her bosom. She was by no means a bad-looking girl. Her thick fair tresses, of a beautiful ashy tint, branched off in two carefully combed semicircles from beneath a narrow rose-coloured fillet pushed almost on to her forehead, white as ivory ; the remainder of her face was slightly sunburnt, with that golden flush peculiar to a thin skin. I could not see her eyes ; she did not raise them ; but I saw distinctly her finely pencilled, arched brows and long lashes ; they were moist, and on one of her cheeks the trace of a tear that had trickled down to her pale lips glistened in the sun. Her little head was altogether very sweet ; even the slightly thick round nose did not spoil it. The expression of her face pleased me specially ; it was so kind and simple, so sad and so full of childlike perplexity at its own grief.

She was evidently expecting some one. Something rustled faintly in the wood ; she immediately raised her head and looked round. In the transparent shade her eyes quickly flashed in front of me—large, bright and shy, like a fawn's. She listened for a few seconds, her gaze riveted on the spot where

the faint sound was heard. Then she sighed, quietly turned her head, bent down still lower and began slowly to sort her flowers. Her eyelids grew red, her lips quivered bitterly, and another tear stole out from beneath the thick lashes and glistened on her cheek. Some little time passed thus ; the poor girl did not move—only now and then she anxiously wrung her hands and listened, still listened. Again something sounded through the wood ; she gave a start. The noise did not cease ; it became more distinct ; it approached, and at last rapid, decided steps were heard. She drew herself up and seemed to grow frightened ; her steadfast gaze began to waver, to be lighted up with expectation. The figure of a man was now caught sight of through the thicket. She looked up, suddenly coloured, smiled joyously and happily, wanted to rise, and immediately lost heart again and grew pale and flurried, and only then raised her trembling, almost suppliant glance to the approaching man when he came up to her and stopped.

I scanned him with curiosity from my hiding-place, and I must confess he did not impress me favourably. He was, to all appearances, the pampered valet of a young, rich gentleman ; his dress revealed a pretension to taste and fashionable elegance. He wore a short bronze-coloured paletôt, probably from his master's wardrobe, buttoned all the way up ; a rose-coloured necktie with lilac ends ; and a black velvet cap with a gold braid, pushed right down on to his eyebrows. His round white shirt collar propped up his ears and cut his cheeks ; and the starched cuffs covered his hand as far as the red crooked fingers, which were adorned with silver and gold rings with turquoise forget-me-nots. His face, rosy, fresh, impudent, was one of those faces which, as far as I have been able to observe, are almost always the aversion of men and very often, more's the pity, the admiration of women. He was evidently trying to twist his impudent features into an expression of disdain and ennui ; he incessantly blinked his milky grey eyes,

small enough already ; he knit his brows, drew down the corners of his lips, yawned affectedly, and with negligent, though not altogether skilful, ease, now arranged his reddish jauntily curled locks, now twitched the yellow stubble which sprouted on his thick upper lip. In a word, no sooner did he catch sight of the young peasant-girl waiting for him than he began to give himself insufferable airs ; he went up to her slowly, with long strides, stopped, shrugged his shoulders, stuck both hands in the pockets of his paletôt, and, scarcely deigning to notice the poor girl with a cursory, careless glance, sat down on the ground.

"Well," he began, still looking about him, swinging his foot and yawning, "have you been here long ?"

The girl could not answer him at once.

"A long time, Victor Alexander," she at length said, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Oh!"

He took off his cap, majestically passed his hand through his thick, stiffly curled hair, which began almost at his very eyebrows, and, looking round with a dignified air, again covered his precious head. "Well, I forgot all about it. And then, you see, there was the rain !" Again yawning. "There's a heap of things to do ; one can't attend to everything, and I got scolded into the bargain. We are going away to-morrow."

"To-morrow ?" exclaimed the girl, fixing on him a frightened look.

"To-morrow. Well, well, well ! Now please," he rejoined hastily and testily, seeing that she was trembling all over and hanging down her head, "please, Akuleena, don't cry. You know that is a thing I can't endure," and he turned up his snub nose. "If you do, I shall go away at once. What nonsense. What's the good of whimpering ?"

"Well, then, I won't, I won't," hurriedly replied Akuleena, gulping down her tears with an effort. "So you are going

away to-morrow?" she repeated after a short silence. "When will God grant that I may see you again, Victor Alexander?"

"Oh, we shall meet some time or other. If not next year, the year after. My master, it appears, wishes to enter government service in St. Petersburg," he continued, drawling out the words carelessly and slightly through his nose. "But possibly we may go abroad."

"You will forget me, Victor Alexander?" said Akuleena mournfully.

"No, why should I? I shall not forget you, only you must be reasonable. Don't be silly. Obey your father. I shall not forget you—not I," and he quietly stretched himself and again yawned.

"Don't forget me, Victor Alexander," she continued in a suppliant voice, "After all, I must have loved you for something. I have no one but you. You say I am to obey my father, but how can I obey him——"

"What?" He seemed to speak from his stomach, lying on his back with his hands under his head.

"Yes, how, Victor Alexander?—you yourself know——"

She was silent; and Victor played with his steel watch chain.

"Akuleena," he at length began, "you are not a silly girl, so don't talk nonsense. It is your welfare that I am anxious for, you understand? After all, you are no fool, not altogether a rustic, as the saying is; no more was your mother. But at the same time you are without education, and consequently you must do as you are told."

"But it is terrible, Victor Alexander."

"Oh, what nonsense you talk, child! What is there so dreadful in that? What have you got there," he continued, going closer to her, "flowers?"

"Flowers," she replied, sadly; "I picked this from the wild mountain-ash," she continued, pausing a little. "It is very good for calves. And this is marigold—for king's evil.

Now, just look what a lovely little flower ; I never in my life saw such a little beauty. Here are forget-me-nots and violets. And these I got for you," she said, pulling from under the yellow mountain-ash a little bunch of blue corn-flowers, tied together with a thin grass. "Will you have them ?"

Victor lazily stretched out his hand, took the flowers, carelessly smelt them, and began to turn them over in his fingers, looking up with pensive gravity.

Akuleena looked at him. In that wistful gaze what wealth of tender devotion, reverent submissiveness and love.

She was afraid of him and did not dare to cry. She was taking leave of him and gazing on him for the last time. And there was he, reclining, stretching himself like a sultan, and receiving her adoration with magnanimous patience and condescension. I confess I looked with indignation at his red face, in which an expression of satisfied, satiated conceit was plainly discernible through the affectation of contemptuous indifference. Akuleena was so beautiful at that moment ; her whole soul trustingly, passionately revealed itself before him, went out to him, caressed him, and he—he let the flowers fall in the grass ; and, pulling out of the side pocket of his paletôt a little round glass in a bronze rim, set to work to stick it in his eye, but though he knitted his brow and screwed up his cheek, and his nose as well, he could not manage to hold it, and at each attempt it slipped out into his hand.

"What is that ?" asked Akuleena at length in astonishment.

"An eyeglass," he replied, with an air of importance.

"What's the use of it ?"

"Why, so as to see better."

"Let me look at it."

Victor frowned, but gave her the glass. "Mind you don't break it."

"Don't be afraid, I won't break it." She timidly put it to her eye. "I can't see anything," she innocently remarked.

"But you must shut your eye," he exclaimed with the tone of a dissatisfied master. She thereupon shut the eye in front of which she was holding the glass. "But not that one, not that one, silly! The other one!" cried Victor; and, without allowing her to correct her mistake, he took the glass away from her. Akuleena blushed, almost laughed, and turned away.

"It's of no use to me, that's very evident."

"To you! I should think not, indeed!"

The poor girl was silent, and heaved a deep sigh.

"Alas, Victor Alexander, what shall I do without you!" she suddenly exclaimed.

"Yes, of course," he began, after a pause; "you will find it rather hard at first, I dare say." He condescendingly patted her on the shoulder, and she gently took his hand and timidly kissed it. "Well, well; there, you are a good girl, after all," he continued, smiling with a self-satisfied air. "But what is to be done? Judge for yourself! I and my master cannot stop here; winter will soon be upon us, and the country in winter, you know yourself, is simply horrible. How different in St. Petersburgh! I can only tell you there are such wonders there as you, little simpleton, have never even dreamt of. Such houses, streets, and then the society, culture—it is simply marvellous!" Akuleena listened to him with rapt attention, her lips slightly parted, like a child's. "But, after all," he said, turning over on the grass, "What is the use of my telling you all that? You can't understand it."

"Why not, Victor Alexander? I understood—I understood it all."

"Very likely, a girl like you!"

Akuleena cast down her eyes. "You used not to talk to me like that, Victor Alexander," she said, without looking up.

"Used?—used! Hark at her! Used!" he exclaimed, as if indignant.

They were both silent.

"But now I must go," said Victor, already leaning on his elbow.

"Wait a little while longer," she answered imploringly.

"What is there to wait for? I have already said good-bye to you."

"Wait just a little while," she repeated.

Victor again lay down and began to whistle. Akuleena did not take her eyes off him. I could see that little by little she was becoming agitated; her lips quivered, her pale cheeks were slightly flushed.

"Victor Alexander," she at length began with a faltering voice, "it is too bad of you—too bad of you, Victor Alexander, it is indeed!"

"What is too bad?" he asked, knitting his brow, and slightly raising and turning his head towards her.

"Too bad, Victor Alexander. If you would only say a kind little word to me at parting; if you would only say to the poor orphan girl——"

"But what am I to say to you?"

"I do not know; you know best, Victor Alexander, you are going away; just one little word. What have I deserved?"

"What a strange girl you are! What can I do?"

"One little word——"

"Oh, it's always the same story," he said testily, at the same time getting up.

"Don't be angry, Victor Alexander," she hurriedly ejaculated, scarcely restraining her tears.

"I am not angry; but you are a silly girl. What is it you want? I tell you I can't marry you, it can't be done. What more do you want? What?" He bent down his head as if awaiting an answer, and spread out his fingers.

"Nothing. I don't want anything," she faltered, hardly

daring to stretch out her trembling hands to him. "And yet just one little word, one parting word—" And the tears streamed down her face.

"There it is, now she has begun to cry," said Victor coldly, pushing his cap over his eyes from behind.

"I don't want anything," she sobbed, covering her face with her hands. "But how can I live at home now, how can I? What will become of me, what will become of me, miserable girl? They will marry the poor little orphan to some brute. Oh my poor head!"

"Sing away, sing away," muttered Victor under his breath, shuffling impatiently with his feet.

"But he might say one little word, just one. Well, Akuleena, well, I—"

She could not finish the sentence, for she began sobbing as though she would break her heart. She buried her face in the grass and burst into bitter, bitter tears. Her whole frame heaved convulsively. The long pent-up feelings at last gushed forth in a torrent of grief. Victor stood over her, stood for a little while, then shrugged his shoulders, turned round and walked away with long strides.

A few seconds passed. She became calmer, raised her head, sprang to her feet and looked round, wringing her hands. She wanted to run after him, but her feet gave way beneath her and she sank on her knees. Unable to endure it any longer, I rushed towards her; but scarcely had she caught sight of me when—wherever she got strength from—she started up and with a faint cry disappeared behind the trees, leaving the flowers scattered on the ground.

I stood there a little while, picked up the bunch of corn-flowers and went out of the wood on to the steppe. The sun was low in the pale blue sky; his rays also seemed to be fading and growing cold; they did not shine, but diffused a uniform, almost watery light. It wanted but half an hour to

evening, and the glow of sunset was just on the point of kindling. A gusty wind whirled in my face across the tall yellow stubble ; little curled up leaves, hurriedly flying before it, swept past over the road and along the border of the wood ; the side of the wood, standing out in the steppe like a wall, dimly visible, trembled all over, and the light glinted from it as from tiny mirrors. On the ruddy grass, on each blade, on the stalks of straw, everywhere waved and glittered innumerable threads of autumn gossamer. I stood still. I was sad. Through the fresh but cheerless smile of fading Nature stole the melancholy dread of impending winter. High overhead, its wings heavily and harshly cleaving the air, flew a cautious raven ; it turned its head, looked sideways at me, fluttered up, and with intermittent croaking hid behind the wood. A large flight of pigeons swept rapidly by from the threshing-floor and, suddenly wheeling round in a column, dispersed over the steppe—a sign of autumn ! Some one drove past behind the bare hill—it was the loud rattling of an empty carriage.

I wended my way home, but for a long time the image of poor Akuleena was present in my thoughts, and her corn-flowers, long since withered, have lain by me to this day.

IVAN TOURGUENIEF.

Sonnet.

(A modern pre-Raphaelite's Apology for the unreality and monotony alleged against his Types of Feminine Beauty.)

UNTO my canvas Womanhood I wooed :
I did not seek to limn the personal grace
Of one dear lady—but the dearer race ;
Nor this fair maid, nor that—but Maidenhood.

Fade out, O unit ! I have understood
The Eternal Womanly. As Eden's place
Is lost within the world, so one maid's face
Is lost in thee—thou Face of all the brood !

All men may be thy lovers ; in that none,
In these dim dream-begotten lineaments,
Need, jealous, judge his own Ideal undone :

Yea, man in every woman shall perceive
A thing more vital than her accidents—
Her martyr spirit, herited from Eve.

WILFRID MEYNELL.

An English Princess.

THE biography of the Princess Alice, written in German by Dr. Sell, and enriched by the letters addressed to her royal mother, has at last been given to the English reader. While the task of translation was still in the hands of the Princess Christian, we published in these pages many of the most memorable of those letters ; but it must not be supposed that in so doing we seriously discounted the interest of the volume just issued by Mr. Murray. To whet and not to satisfy the appetite was our hope then, as it still is in the supplementary remarks which we now offer. For, in truth, no magazine article, and still less the yet more fragmentary notices which every newspaper has printed, exhaust, or even adequately represent, the interest of the volume as a whole.

According to a story told in the studios, Mr. Millais recently said of a statue by Mr. Thornycroft, that if it were broken to bits, and buried on classic ground, the finder of a fragment at some future day would proclaim to the world the discovery of a new tribute to the genius of an ancient Greek. Yet if all the parts were not gathered together into a perfect whole, history could not vouch that the sculptor owned that mastery of proportion and of composition essential to his supremacy in art. And these fragments of the Princess Alice's letters, published here and there throughout the land, might, indeed, be taken for fragments from the lives of heroines or of saints ; but only in the completeness of the volume will be found the whole beauty and balance of the character of this daughter of the Queen. Moreover, newspaper-notices are open to suspicions. By adroitly taking the cream off a volume, they often tantalize a palate which, when it thirstily approaches the volume out of which

a cunning journalist has made so charming a draught, finds remaining only the thinnest of skimmed milk. It is necessary, therefore, to say at once that such is not the case with the book before us. No weary reviewer, anxious to say the civil thing or the kind one, has had occasion to tear his hair over the task of gathering together so many attractive scraps as will fill the shop-window of a single short paper. The volume bears to be read from cover to cover.

If the biography by Dr. Sell is far less interesting than the letters of the Princess, it has this conspicuous merit—it is extremely brief. Besides being briefly, it is on the whole well done, though it hardly avoids those errors which beset the path of the royal biographer and all his brotherhood. These have done their best at all times to make royal persons, if not contemptible, at least ridiculous. In truth, royalty fares badly enough on all hands in the way it is presented to the public. All the ordinary news that a country has of a Court is of that conventional kind which nowadays touches no hearts. The recurring announcements which tell us that the Queen walked on the slopes, or that this lord-in-waiting was succeeded by that, rouse no human sympathy, and discover the monarch to the people as little more than a machine. And when a statesman breaks silence and tells us of this or that Prince, heroic virtue and sublime genius are the terms applied to that average of conduct and attainments, the absence of which would be little less than a catastrophe in our brothers and our sons. The newspapers, too, are apt to lash themselves into curious displays of what is supposed, by tired writers at midnight, to be expressive of the loyalty of the nation. If they would only be natural, only say what *they* think, and not what they think other people are thinking, how refreshing to everybody would their sentiments be! The doggerel verses reprinted at the end of this volume from some paper which published them at the time of the Princess's death, illus-

trate what I mean to a nicety—their trite insincerities are so much lumber, obscuring anything that is lovely in individuality, or sincere in mourning. The biographer calls them “beautiful,” and no doubt thinks them so—it is not the only evidence he gives of a rather blunt discrimination. He is of the number of those who believe that a royal personage is not of common clay. The “flesh and blood” theory of Mr. Gladstone he might apply to Jack Cade, but to a Lord John Cade less certainly, and to Prince John Cade of Hesse Darmstadt not at all. Domestic happiness, he infers in one place, falls to the lot only of the middle classes—royal palaces at any rate must hardly count on a display of such *bourgeois* virtues and sentiments as matrimonial fidelity and maternal love. It is precisely because the Princess shows herself to be, before everything else, a daughter, a wife, and a mother in these letters that they are welcomed by English readers everywhere, and that the writer of them is held in singular affection. It is Dr. Sell who makes pretensions of another sort for the Princess—it is he who would show her as an artist, a person of fine literary taste, a far-seeing politician, and all the rest of it; but the Princess is content to show us herself as she really is. Nor will a character so beautiful suffer anything from the artificial gloss which others involuntarily put upon it.

The letters of the Princess may be said to be unique. It is quite true that we have records of royal life other than the life of Courts. The Journals of the Queen show her in simplest aspects—show her to us as a mother, a wife, a daughter, with all the details of domesticity. But the Queen has given us diaries, records, what you will; but never yet a book. It is Professor Ruskin who somewhere draws the distinction between volumes of the hour and volumes of all time. The volumes of the hour are “simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you, and strictly speaking they are not books at all,

but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful or necessary to-day ; whether worth keeping or not is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast-time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a book at all, nor in the real sense, to be read." But if so many of the books issued from the press are according to the Professor's definition mere letters, these Letters of the Princess Alice may take rank as a book. If this be paradoxical, greater paradoxes remain. These letters are conspicuous because commonplace, unexpected because ordinary, memorable because they have nothing to mark them from the letters of a million daughters and a million wives.

Having said so much, but not a word more than appears to be necessary to fulfil Dr. Johnson's admonition—"clear your minds of cant," we may pass on to look at the autograph portrait of the Princess with which her letters present us. And in truth her own characteristic is an absence of cant. It was not possible that she should in all things be free from convention in her ways of thought in theological, literary or political matters ; time, if that alone, failed her for a training which would have taught her to sift the wheat from the chaff of contemporary opinion. The books she read, she read always with the large interest and enthusiasm of a school-girl, especially books of the Kingsley kind. Accepting "Westward-Ho !" as history, she declares the conversion of Lord Ripon to be "so un-English" and sees in the High Churchman a Jesuit in disguise. She visited convents in Rome, and her idea of the nuns in dedicating their lives to good works is

refreshingly unselfish, and simple :—“ Their idea is to pray for those who cannot pray for themselves.” She attended the ceremonies in the churches, ceremonies of which she knew nothing, but of which “ she asked, as all Protestants do, how the pure simple Christian religion could possibly be so misrepresented.” So at least we are assured by the biographer, who, it is worth while to note, is a Lutheran minister ; and I feel bound to say that the words seem more natural from his lips than from those of the Princess ; while, as to the taste of introducing the statement into a volume which ought to belong to the nation at large, I need say nothing at all. The Princess asserted with all her might the supremacy of the State over the Church—perhaps because her husband asserted it ; and her opinion of the “ un-English ” nature of Lord Ripon’s change or development of faith was really an echo of a voice which was, in truth, far less worthy of attention than her own simple thoughts. To live in London and to read the *Times* every day is the prescription given by an eminent man to secure demoralization of character ; and the reading of the *Times*, even in dull Darmstadt, was not without its temporary effect upon the principles of the Princess in this particular case of Lord Ripon. How little she really, in her heart, felt that Religion was secondary to State influences and to national prejudice, may be gathered by the pleasure she expresses that the Duke of Edinburgh’s Russian wife was to be “ allowed ” to keep her own creed, and the asterisks which follow the remarks probably represent some regretful lines about the case of those beautiful princesses, whose religion was held in abeyance with a fine impartiality until a husband should appear to decide it ; so that Alexandra and Dagmar married the creeds as well as the crowns of the future heads of the two vitally divergent Greek and Anglican communions.

It is in this volume that the Queen and the Prince Consort have the best tribute that can ever be paid to them. It is

here alone, indeed, that many readers will find in the Prince Consort a personality that at all attracts them. The facile logic expressed in those verses of our childhood in which Napoleon tells the English sailor

“A noble mother must have bred
So brave a son,”

leads us to conclude that a wise and a tender father must have moulded a daughter so devoted to his memory, and so full of practical sense. A certain dependence on self was early impressed on the royal children. The Swiss cottage at Osborne, with its kitchen, store-room and gardens, was “made the means of their learning how to do household work, and to direct the management of a small establishment. The parents were invited there as guests, to partake of the dishes which the Princesses themselves had prepared ; and there too each child was allowed to choose its own occupation and to enjoy perfect liberty.” During their free life in the Highlands the children were encouraged to visit the poor. Already, at an early age, Princess Alice felt a good deal drawn to do kindnesses to others. This amiable quality grew more apparent in her as the years went on. Perhaps her somewhat delicate health was one reason why a life of pleasure did not hold out a full cup of fascination to her. It did not occur to her even then that she was exempt from duty, and all the discipline that word implies, because she was born of the blood royal. The really frank “confessions” of a royalty would make curious reading. If, as we have said, the public, seeing its rulers through the media of court circulars and formal flatteries, does not get a very favourable impression of them ; on the other hand, what estimate of the people must rulers get who know them mostly as persons who stare, and, on occasion, cheer ? As in the spiritual order every man knows the depth of his own misery ; so, too, every man, and particularly every prince, feels the abyss of the commonplace of his own

personality. Weary of themselves, they go forth to drive in the Park, and are surrounded by a crowd which returns home to dine all the more satisfactorily because it has caught a glimpse of the face on which no sign of royalty sits. "Our frivolous upper classes," says the Princess somewhere, and no one can wonder, considering the episodes of royal existence, that she should utter one of those dangerously attractive generalities which are never wholly true. If the Princess could have followed even the loungers of the Row into their homes, no one more eagerly than she would have admired the serious purpose at many of their hearts. But that is just what a royalty cannot do. And in this circumstance we may find the reason why this Princess and all princesses think their husbands and fathers and sons uniquely wise and superhumanly endowed ; they see them, and them only, in their serious moods ; and the rest of the world when it is agog. "Private individuals," she writes to her mother, "are of course, far the best off—our privileges being more duties than advantages—and their absence would be no privation compared to the enormous advantage of being one's own master, and of being on equality with most people, and able to know men and the world as they are, and not merely as they please to show themselves to please us." Thus far the discrimination of the Princess went ; but she might have gone on to consider that she had her compensations. The only people whom she could see in their off moments—her own family—became doubly dear and noble to her. Their virtue in her eyes was unique. So entirely was it so in the case of her father (a very ordinary father as fathers go) that his example was enough to waken a kind of religious enthusiasm in her—the fruitful source of kind words and unselfish deeds to the end of her days.

Quite unlike the life of "the frivolous upper classes" was that which the Princess selected to lead. Whenever we think of the Girlhood of the Nation, Professor Ruskin also comes into

our thoughts. He it is who, holding maidens in mind, has spoken of and to them in words as pure and as intimate as is the ideal of womanhood in the heart of man. The nun said to Sir Galahad,

"I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt."

And of this Professor Galahad of ours it may be said that he has bound a belt, not of golden hair, but of golden words, round the girls of England. He—whose praises are as precious as they are generous—has praised, but he has also lectured them. "Of all the insolent, all the foolish persuasions that by any chance could enter and hold your empty little heart, this is the proudest and foolishest—that you have been so much the darling of the heavens, and favourite of the fates, as to be born in the very nick of time, and in the punctual place, when and where pure Divine truth has been sifted from the errors of the nations ; and that your papa had been providentially disposed to buy a house in the convenient neighbourhood of the steeple under which that immaculate and final verity would be beautifully proclaimed. Do not think it, child ; it is not so. This, on the contrary, is the fact—unpleasant you may think it ; pleasant it seems to *me*—that you, with all your pretty dresses, and kindly thoughts, and saintly aspirations, are not one whit more thought of or loved by the great Maker and Master than any poor little red, black, or blue savage, running wild in the pestilent woods, or naked on the hot sands of the earth : and that of the two, you probably know less about God than she does ; the only difference being that she thinks little of Him that is right, and you much that is wrong." Now, it is quite true that the Princess Alice, for reasons which appertain to Princesses, and which we have stated already, did no doubt think her papa one of those persons who had bought, or, at least, who inhabited, a house in "the convenient neighbourhood" aforesaid. But her resulting limitations were of the

most forgivable kind, and there was no one more apt to learn, perhaps under circumstances of exceptional difficulty, the lesson which the Professor teaches. Never from her lips arose the prayer, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other girls are, not in that I fast twice in the week while they feast, but in that I feast seven times a week while they fast." How little she was inclined to rest content with the lofty accidents of her station may be seen on almost every page of her letters, stated naïvely enough at times. "All the natural cleverness and sharpness in the world won't serve nowadays unless one has learnt something. I feel this so much ; and just in our position it is more and more required and expected." On another occasion she says to her mother, "I feel so entirely as you do on the differences of rank, and how all-important it is for Princes and Princesses to know that they are nothing better than or above others, save through their own merit ; and that they have only the double duty of living for others and being an example—good and modest." Again, touching a deeper chord, she writes : "As you say, life at best is a struggle. Happy those who can lie down to rest, having fought their battle well ; or those who have been spared fighting it at all, and have remained pure, barely touching this earth, so mixed up with grief and sin." The words are those, not only of a woman as humble as Professor Ruskin would have her, but of a mother who had lost a little son.

During the early period of her engagement to Prince Louis of Hesse, the Princess Alice took duty by the side of her sick grandmother, the Duchess of Kent—shortening evenings which would otherwise have lagged wearily by reading aloud and by playing on the piano. A little later the Prince Consort died, and, in the grief of the Queen's family, Prince Louis feared he might be forgotten, and the engagement brought to an end. But the Princess had pledged herself, and never thought of breaking faith with her lover. Had she been an only daughter,

and not been already engaged, she would doubtless have clung to her mother, as her younger sister has since done. " You say rightly," she wrote to the Queen later in life, when the cares of training her own children were heavy upon her, " what a fault it is of parents to bring up their daughters with the main object of marrying them. This is said to be a too prominent feature in the modern English education of the higher classes. I want to strive to bring up the girls without seeking this as the sole object of the future—to feel they can fill up their lives so well otherwise. A marriage for the *sake* of marriage is surely the greatest mistake a woman can make. I know what an absorbing feeling that of devotion to one's parent is. When I was at home it filled my whole soul." And again : " I do think it so natural and dutiful to remain with one's parent as long as one is wanted. Is it not a duty when no one else can take one's place? I should feel it so." Indeed a little home-sickness was in the heart of the Princess until the end. " How I do love you, sweet Mama ! There is no sacrifice I would not make for you ; and as our meetings are of late years so fleeting and far between, when they are over I feel the separation very much."

But the home-sickness of the daughter never interfered with the devotion of the wife. The Princess was far too sensible to make Prince Louis hostile to his mother-in-law ; and as for the contending claim of husband and children on her thoughts, she seems to have shown in that respect also a perfectly balanced affection. " There is, as you say," she writes to her mother, " nothing more injurious for children than that they should be made a fuss about. I want to make them unselfish, unspoiled and contented ; as yet this is the case. That they take a greater place in my life than is often the case in our families, comes from my not being able to have enough persons of a responsible sort to take charge of them always ; certain things remain undone from that reason if I do not do them, and *they*

would be the losers. I certainly do not belong by nature to those women who are above all *wife*; but circumstances have forced me to be the mother in the real sense, as in a private family, and I had to school myself to it I assure you, for many small self-denials were necessary. Baby-worship, or having the children indiscriminately about one, is not at all the right thing, and a perpetual talk about one's children makes some women intolerable. I hope I steer clear of these faults—I least try to do so."

The references to the straitened means of the household at Darmstadt are frank as they are frequent. She had a dowry from England of £30,000 and an annual allowance of £6,000 a year. What her husband had is not stated. With this sum her father complained that she "would not be able to do great things." Apparently she was not able to do little things—for change of air to the sea after sickness, employment of a governess, and other such not very great domestic luxuries, she finds, from time to time, beyond her means, or necessarily deferred. It is pleasant to add that the Queen constantly made presents to the young couple—presents which the Princess always acknowledges with the graceful politeness which, besides deeper sentiment, marks the whole of her correspondence with her mother.

Of the strong affection, strengthening with the years, which the Princess bore to her brothers and sisters there is abundant expression. Writing in 1866, after a visit from the Prince of Wales to Darmstadt, she says: "Dear Bertie's visit is over, and it has been a great pleasure to us to have him under our own roof, where we had an opportunity in a small way to return his hospitality and constant kindness to us. God bless him, dear brother! He is the one who has from my childhood been so dear to me." On another occasion, writing from Sandringham while on a visit to the Prince and Princess, she declares: "I pray earnestly for him that God's blessing may

rest on him, and that he may be guided to do what is wise and right, so that he may tide safely through the anxious times that are before him. They are both charming hosts." When one of the Prince's equerries died in 1874, she wrote : " Dear Bertie's true and constant heart suffers on such occasions, for he can be constant in friendship, and all who serve him serve him with deep attachment." Her praises of the Princess of Wales, which are frequent, will be particularly sweet to English ears. The Duke of Edinburgh is presented to us as a quiet youth, who will not be laughed into gaieties of which he did not approve ; while of Prince Leopold, who was to outlive her for several years, but be the first to follow her, she is constantly writing with sisterly solicitude. His life was the more precious to all the family because it was so fragile a one.

The Princess always spoke of her childhood and girlhood as the happiest time of her life. Perhaps in this her experience was not a common one. Apart from the great sorrows that may chance to fall in married life, the loss of those nearest and dearest, or any special anxieties about the training and conduct of children, surely few men or women, save those with a distinct vocation for celibacy, can feel that they have begun to live until they have divided their lives with another. Matrimony is still for most people the secure method for doubling joys and halving sorrows. Of course we refer only to happy marriages, of which the Princess's was one, and which are still everywhere the rule—a rule, doubtless, with its exceptions. On this subject the Princess was somewhat of a pessimist in regard to other people ; or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, as has been said of her in her estimate of her father, she was an optimist for herself. " Really there are few such husbands as Louis. To possess a heart like his, and to call it my *own*, I am ever prouder of and more grateful for from year to year. Nowadays, young men like Louis are rare enough, for it is considered fine to neglect one's wife, and for the wife

to have amusements in which her husband does not share." The married relationship of her sister and her brother-in-law, the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, was one which she had had some opportunity to observe, and she was willing therefore to admit it also within the charmed circle of marriages made in heaven. "We sisters are singularly blessed in our husbands." Yet how many wives among our readers are there who have not said, and are not for ever thinking, all the tender things which the Princess expresses in these letters? "When Louis is at home and free, then I have *all* that this world can give me, for I am indeed never happier than at his dear side ; and time only increases our affection and binds us closer together." For the cynical in such matters let us hasten to add that this is the experience of one who had been for five years a wife. Twice five years passed without bringing any change. "Again and again I long to give all and all to my dear Louis, for he is all that is good and true and pure." Again : "There is such blessed peace in being at his side, being his wife ; there is such a feeling of security ; and we two have a world of our own when we are together, which nothing can touch or intrude upon. My lot is indeed a blessed one." In time of war—it was the Austro-Prussian war—her anxieties were keen indeed—such anxieties as would do much to diminish wars if only all kings and ministers, as well as their wives, could be made to suffer them. "The new anxiety to-night of knowing a dreadful battle is expected—perhaps going on—in which dear Louis again must be ! I can scarcely bear up any longer ; I feel it is getting too much. God Almighty stand by us ! my courage is beginning to sink. I see no light anywhere. Anything may have happened to him, and I can't hear or know it. I could not go to him were he wounded. What I have suffered and do suffer no words can describe—the sleepless nights, the long days without news—how I pray it may soon end, and darling Louis be spared me!" Later,

during the Franco-Prussian war, there was the same separation, but also the same happy re-union. Seven months had elapsed since he had gone to the wars, and a new baby had come. "He has never seen his dear little boy. It always makes me sad to look at him, though now I have every reason to hope that, please God, I shall have the joy of seeing Louis come home, and of placing his baby in his arms. My heart is full, as you can fancy, and, much as I long to see Louis, I almost dread the moment ; the emotion will be so great, and the long pent-up feelings will find vent." Surely these are the common-places, not of one home, but of a million homes ; banalities, it may be, but banalities which are perpetually refreshing.

The serious purpose of the Princess had abundant scope during her life at Darmstadt. These two wars, for instance, brought with them not only personal grief, but duties towards the wounded, the dying and the dead. It is popularly supposed that princesses and other great ladies play at charity. Let anybody who thinks so try the game. He will try it once, perhaps twice ; but certainly not twenty times. Real fatigues, real toil, real sacrifice not only of pleasant ease but of needed sleep, must be encountered by all who would serve their fellows. There is no royal road to charity, any more than there is a royal road to Heaven. All this the Princess felt, and faced it bravely. In times of peace, too, she was a mother of her people, so far as lay within her power ; for even a Princess is only a unit and can do but little when she has done her all. Not only did she learn to minister to the sick with her own hands, but on her own head she took the worries of initiating and guiding movements for hospitals, and for the better training and the employment of women. Among her guests at Darmstadt were Miss Carpenter and Miss Hill ; and the Queen (the last personage in the world, one might think, to listen to arguments why women should not take degrees, or vote at elections, or sit at the council tables of academies or even of cabinets) appears

to have been a little alarmed at some of the Princess's acts and opinions. When she studied physiology, as every mother, if not every woman, ought to study it, she breaks the news as gently as she can to the Queen, who belongs to a generation which cared for none of these things. But never was the Princess anything but the most womanly of women. Nor was there in all her studies and opinions one that did not stand her or her less-favoured sisters in good stead.

Of the illnesses and deaths of her children our readers already know enough. The letters in which those tragedies are recorded, or the ominous telegrams, will be among the most chastened memories of many hearts. Of them it is not too much to say, what Emerson said of Montaigne's essays, "Cut those words and they would bleed—they are vascular and alive." They will outlive their writer for many a year. She died at Darmstadt in 1878, and a monument by Boehm marks her resting-place in the chapel of the Grand Ducal Palace. But it is in English hearts that her memory will longest be enshrined.

JOHN OLDCASTLE.

Reviews and Views.

IT would be difficult to pronounce on the prospects of English art, as shown by the exhibitions of this and recent years, inasmuch as art displays tendencies of infinite variety. They resemble the fortuitous variations in all possible directions which form the beginnings of species in the Darwinian theory. But which of these variations will chance to be taken up by the fortune of the hour, continued and increased and strengthened into a definitely and steadily developing tendency, in the organic vitality which implies a certain future, the student of artistic evolution would not yet pronounce. Perhaps it is the depressing effect of watching the contemporary processes of evolution, instead of taking them conveniently telescoped by the great perspectives of scientific history, which inclines us to doubt whether present art in England has any one variation of stronger purpose and promise than another, and to believe that mere chance is working and will work yet awhile hither and thither, fitfully, before there is a sure sign of determination.

But whether significant as regards the future, or not, the variations are distinct, and point altogether different ways. Most conspicuous are three ways—those of mediævalism, of the following of modern Continental example, and of indigenous landscape, most typically represented by the works of Scotch painters. Other manners there are—as many, indeed, as the men—but for the very reason of their number insignificant, and not likely to give to an observant prophet the sign of a true tendency. And of these three apparently important ways are we justified in considering that one which leads

backwards as a way of living modern art? Few are following it now. Mr. Burne-Jones is almost alone since Rossetti's death, but this is not an important point. If there is a "school" in his teaching and example, we need not count scholars. But his inspiration is so largely literary that we may doubt, in days when the distinctions between the arts are gaining in definiteness, whether there *is* a school in his work and influence. But his picture this year is so admirable in its rich and deliberate completeness, that, more than any other in either gallery, it holds a memorable place. "King Cophetua" and the "Beggar Maid" take the pleasure of their *mésalliance* sadly enough, but Mr. Burne-Jones's sadness is too evidently caught on the end of his brush to affect us with serious sympathy. The lack of joy has the, perhaps, unexpected effect of making the subject more trivial than it is; and the dreary flesh-tints of the picture changing to a glow on the bride's feet only, help to put the figures into a secondary place. The splendid golds and silvers and peacock colours of the accessories, and the execution which conveys them, make of the picture a wonderful bit of handicraft. Mr. Burne-Jones presents us with an accumulation of facts rather than with a summary of truths. He must, no doubt, loathe impressionary art, but the impressionist might accuse him of making inventories.

Mr. Fildes, on the other hand, may be taken as the representative, with Mr. Woods and Mr. Stott, of the painter-like painters. The mediaevalists combine two extreme and extra artistic things—literary motive and the execution of a mere handicraft. The painters named above stand in the right middle place—the place of artists. They produce art, not handicraft; and their inspiration is in intelligence and impression, not in intellect and afterthought. Therefore, to all who care much for the distinctions and boundaries, and who believe

that the best future of literature, music, the linear, the plastic, the chromatic arts, lies in a more sensitive obedience to their own methods and mediums, the work of Mr. Fildes and his colleagues will seem to contain the best promise for the English school. Another thing in favour of this kind of work is that it is international, and has therefore a good chance of growth in times when any accentuated national characteristic is discredited as a larger kind of provincialism. Mr. Fildes's former pictures, by the way, had not prepared us for the full accomplishment and science of his present manner.

The subject of Mr. Fildes's "Venetian Life" is fully and boldly realistic. The artist accepts the facts of a Venice which is not untouched with a certain modern vulgarity. He does not make believe at all—not even as regards costume—which so few painters of Italian life are able to forbear idealizing a little. The girls, who in his brilliant picture are sewing on the steps of a canal, are precisely the amiable, slovenly, chatter-boxes of the sea city, whose pictorial value the artists of the day have with one accord discovered. M. Roussoff has painted them decorously easing their cheerful consciences at confession ; Mr. Van Haanen shows them in the pauses of their indoor work ; Mr. Woods out in the sunshine of that gracious summer which makes the sea and sky of Venice bloom and burn with as much vernal splendour as garden and meadow show elsewhere. Mr. Logsdail presented them as they stood after work listening to the band on the Piazza. It is the more conventional artists who painted the Venetian girl perpetually going to the well. As a matter of fact, she does go there a great deal, but the incident is banal. Altogether, the Venetian girl has won more than her share of some of the most intelligent attention of contemporary art.

The Scotch landscapes are this year more national than ever. Mr. Peter Graham has a cold and intensely purple "Dawn" in the inevitable glen. Such qualities of daybreak as a rude hand can grasp are there. His dawn is cold and keen, sharp and raw ; it is a kind of necessary passage from night to day. Of the spirituality or the mystery of the time there is no hint ; and we can imagine that the intrusion of Mr. Peter Graham's art upon the scene he has chosen to paint had the effect of scaring away some sensitive significance from the hour and from the mists and the moorlands. There is a spirit in these, as well as in the woods, which Wordsworth bids the boy at his sport of nutting touch with a gentle hand ; but the hand of our Scotch contemporaries is not gentle. Some idealization they do indeed indulge in ; and it takes a form which does violence to Nature. For their idealization consists in the exaggeration of certain kinds of colour, especially in the adulteration of pure greys with a violent violet, which they persuade themselves that artistic eyes can see, though it is imperceptible to the vision of the simple outsider. We have said enough to indicate that whatever our fear may be, our hope certainly is *not* that the "vigorous" landscape of the day is the picture that contains the increasing tendency—if indeed, to recur to our first doubt, there is any certain tendency—in British art.

Mr. Alma Tadema has done his utmost at least a hundred times ; and his art gives an impression of stationariness and sometimes of dulness—which is one result of this kind of completeness. The only way in which Mr. Alma Tadema escapes the dulness of his deliberate manner is by opening out into the palpitating blue light and air of the Southern summers. With these his brush plays, in the sweeter and more vivid moods which are fitting for art. And in the painting of flowers, too, he acquires a certain vivacity and sympathy with life which are

curiously absent from his dealings with the higher organism of the figure. Nothing could well be stiller and flatter, for instance, than his rendering of the persons of the "Hadrian"—the emperor and the feeble modern blond profile of the young man on the right, the hard and inanimate empress especially. As for the perspective of this infelicitous picture, it is impossible to avoid questioning what comes in such a questionable shape. The fact is that the construction of this divided composition—which has groups above and groups in the middle, and groups in the distance, and fragments of men casually distributed as the line of the frame will have it—suggests a series of afterthoughts, from which the perspective itself has too evidently suffered. Mr. Alma Tadema, by the way, calls his picture "Hadrian in England," and the public has been told, moreover, in a kind of authoritative manner, that he turned away the head of the potter's wife who is doing the honours of her husband's pottery, as the Roman emperor and empress inspect his labours, because he hesitated to attempt her fresh English colouring. If Mr. Alma Tadema believes that there were English and an England in the days of Hadrian, he cannot be accused of similar carelessness in his historical study of the pottery itself, which he has made the object of pilgrimage to several museums. As regards the subject of this most elaborate picture, it seems to combine triviality and remoteness in a manner which is ingenious. In avoiding emotion and dramatic expression, this artist is obeying a principle which he has chosen; but in painting the slight incidents which remain he could assuredly be better advised to keep to general incidents rather than tie his work up with the label of names and dates which seem to accentuate the lack of interest they are intended to remedy.

Among landscapes, we have at the Academy, besides the Scotch schools, Mr. Brett's work as representative of the

inventory style of record of facts ; the almost equally literal, though more sentimental, scenes of Mr. Leader, who sticks with determination to the evening effect which first won him the eyes of the public and the official recognition of the Academy ; the advanced and fresh out-door work of Mr. Adrian Stokes and those who, like him, do not suffer their canvases to see the inside of a studio, and whose science and observation as to impression is matched by their charm of execution ; and lastly, the pictures of the one imaginative landscapist now working in England—Mr. Albert Goodwin. Many more painters there are, of prominent name, but their work ranges itself more or less in the several classes.

As for the most futile of all futile art—incompetent presentation of small historical *genre*, incident pictures in their utmost banality—the Academy of 1884 keeps the number of these to which we have been accustomed of late. It is decidedly a smaller number than was common some years ago ; and for this we are thankful, even though we must see the line devoted to smooth Dr. Johnsons pink and tight of flesh ; to uncertain Cromwells ; to ornamental Bothwells and Marys ; to indefinite Wallensteins ; to a gathering of the Kitcat Club, where our interest in the heads is considerably enhanced by a “Key,” or explanation on the frame whereby we are enabled to recognize the vague and diluted semblances of Addison, Congreve, and Steele, and of a Marlborough (the hero who “engrossed the graces”) in a *tournure* which might be the ideal of a maker of fancy-dresses. There are far more serious intellectual offences than such sins against the common pleasant quality of intelligence ; but none are perhaps more irritating than these.

The most definite successes of the Academy, according to popular opinion, have doubtless been made by Mr. Orchardson with his "Mariage de Convenance," and by Mr. Waterhouse, who has painted a picture full of striking and obvious dramatic expression, and of golden light and shadow, and has moreover painted it with sufficient, and not excessive, dexterity. The semicircle of girls whom he shows us in the rich glow of a Cairene interior, listening for the whispers of a ghastly oracle—a dead man's head fastened to the wall and surrounded with lights—are too much studied from the same model; but their actions are impulsive, and the picture has the good quality of beauty. Mr. Orchardson has spent his elegant skill upon a scene which—intentionally ignoble as it is of course—takes a true vulgarity from the coarse looks of discontent with which the young wife meets the solicitous eyes of her husband across the dinner-table of their first married days. As in English novels, so generally in English pictures, a meaning is over-explained and over-emphasized, and all delicacy of observation is destroyed. We shall perhaps be accused of offending against the general reverence for a master, if we express a belief that Thackeray set the bad example of this kind of *brutal* pressing of a point. But where in all his work shall we find a passage in which he was content with the necessary expression of his thought?

The foreign exhibitors at Burlington House have sent work which should have its influence. The "Afternoon Coffee" of Mr. Van Haanen is indeed one of the brilliant series which began with the "Pearl Stringers," and have quickly founded a little school. And while Mr. Fildes, Mr. Logsdail and Mr. Woods have improved upon their leader in outdoor impressionistic brightness, Mr. Van Haanen keeps his superiority in fulness and sweetness of touch. The painting of the confused

interior of a Venetian dressmaker's workroom in his present picture is masterly as regards *ensemble* and vigour of effect, thoroughness of action, and realistic intelligence of character, M. Dagnan's "Vaccination" is another example of the same kind of excellence. It should also teach such of our painters as are still inclined to treat the baby of ordinary life with the sentimentality which costs nothing, and which has very intelligibly brought scorn upon the practice of domestic art, that the baby need not necessarily be the subject of banalities. M. Dagnan's scene is a quaint one, and he gives it the simplicity and impulse of Nature by an exquisitely intelligent observation. Such is the delicate truth with which the painter has watched every movement of the children as they wait their turn on their mothers' knees, especially of the infant on whose arm the village practitioner is about to begin operations, and the light tones of whose hair and flesh are half drowned and effaced in the summer light that comes in at the window. For the picture is especially admirable for its rightness of light. Mr. Van Beers has had the honours of the line for the neat and excessively heartless sward and trees with a carriage, a woman in pink, and a headless statue, which he calls "Soir d'Eté;" M. Mesdag's picture being skyed. Higher than the one and lower than the other, is a specimen of Mr. Sargent's skill, which has probably puzzled the hangers. Nor perhaps will many visitors be fully aware of the extraordinary execution of the dress and chair in this portrait, the perfectly triumphant hand by which satin and lace have been carried off. But the flesh has the hard look which too great dash and simplicity of tone are apt to produce in work which is just a little too clever. Mr. Sargent's peculiar form of achievement is an interesting sign of the receptiveness of Americans with regard to French influence.

To return to the Grosvenor for a glance at the representative portraits. Mr. W. B. Richmond in his female portraits has reached a distinction and a grace and sweetness which express the mental, as well as the physical, beauty of his sitters. Moreover, he causes them to "show their wit in their attire," which is worthy of note as being full of worthiness and dignity. The portraits of Miss Rose Mirlees and Miss Dora Mirlees, and the picture called "May," are exquisite for thought and grace. The portrait exhibited by Mr. Whistler is in as direct a contrast with these as a heroine of dexterous modern French fiction with the lady whom Wordsworth describes as informed in face and figure by the silence and the calm, the movement and the vital delights of Nature. Needless to say, we are making no impertinent criticisms on Mr. Whistler's sitter; he would probably have given the cachet of a fifth-rate *boulevard* distinction to Wordsworth's maiden herself if he had had her portrait to paint. Mr. Frank Holl's work at both exhibitions is as masterly as ever, while it has gained much in dignity.

Mr. Aitchison, whose anti-Gothic utterances, by the way, will provoke a counterblast from a future contributor, mentions the work which Mr. Burges did for the Marquis of Bute at Cardiff; but a few more details about the tower, which forms our illustration, may not be amiss. It is thus described in the admirable selection of designs by Mr. Burges, published by his brother-in-law, Mr. R. P. Pullan (15, Buckingham Street, Strand), who has also issued what may be called a companion volume of "Studies in Architectural Style." He says:—

"This grand mass of masonry stands at the south-west angle of the enclosure, and from its great height is visible for miles round. It is square in plan, and rises unbroken to a height of seventy feet. Here a bold string-course runs round the

tower. Above this string there are three arched recesses on each side, except the north. In the centre recess is a clock face, and in those of the sides colossal figures, representing the planets, richly polychromatized. Above the arcade there are bold machicolations, the interspaces being filled with shields. A pyramidal roof, in two stages, crowns the whole. The basement and first floor are occupied by servants. On the second story, which is approached from the level of the ambulatory, on the walls, there is a richly decorated apartment, which has been called the winter smoking-room. The subjects chosen for the decorations are the seasons and signs of the Zodiac. On the third floor there is a bedroom, the paintings of which are in outline, and refer to precious stones and metals. Two other rooms intervene between this and the uppermost chamber, which is the most spacious of all, as the machicolations have been utilized for the support of its walls. It has a gallery and an arched wooden roof. This has been called the summer smoking-room. The subjects of the paintings are the history of Cupid and Psyche, the elements, and the signs of the Zodiac."—[ED.]

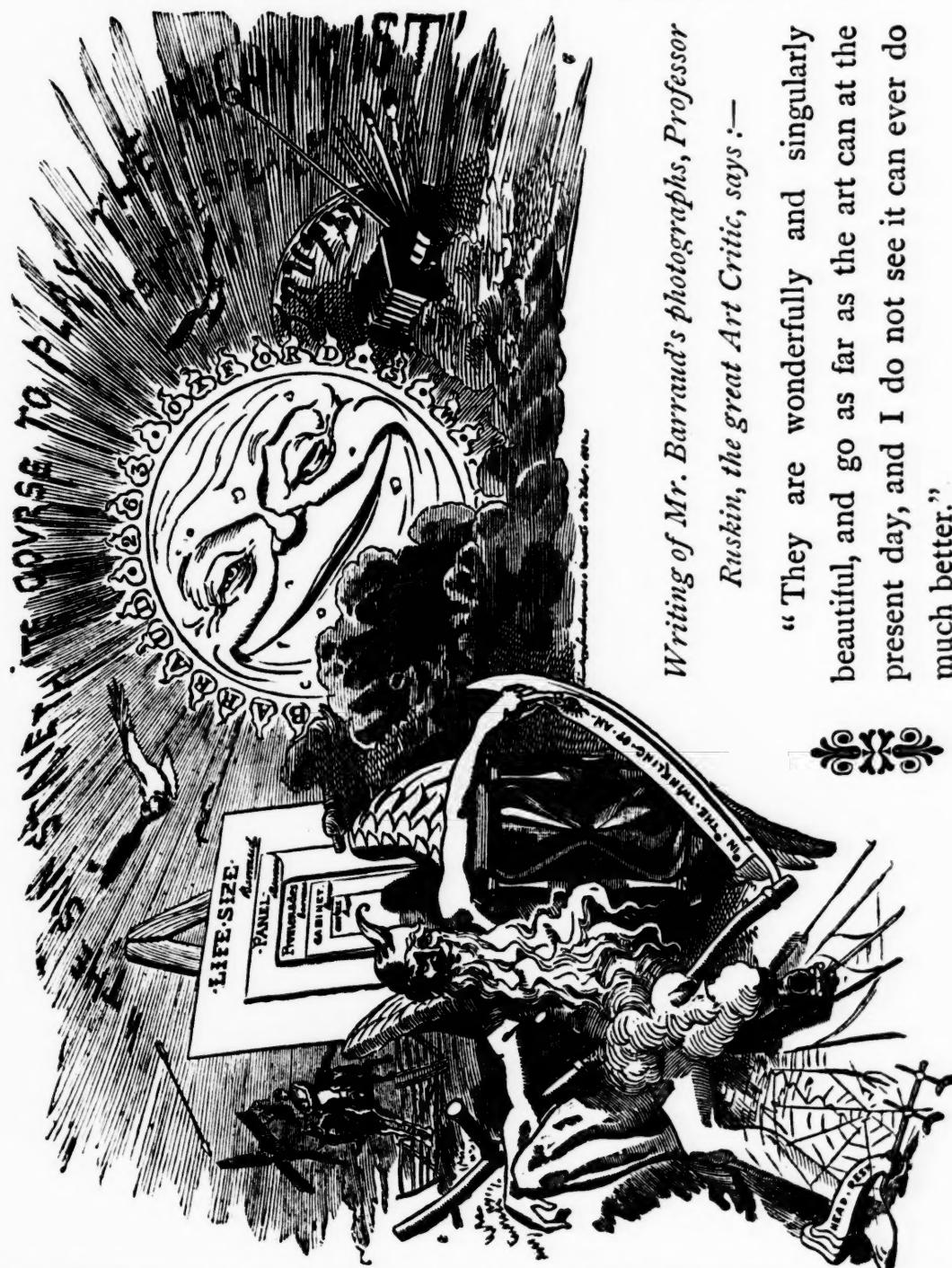
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CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

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